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Daily Report
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CONTENTS

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

Yemen's Salih, Ethiopian Mediator Comment on Talks *[Sanaa Radio]* 1
Yemen Official Stresses Sovereignty Over Island *[AL-RA'Y 3 Jan]* 1
Yemeni Leaders Reiterate Position on Island Dispute *[Sanaa Radio]* 3
Eritrean Coverage of Conflict Over Islands *[cross-reference]* 3

Inter-Arab Affairs

Butrus-Ghali, League Chief Comment After Talks *[MENA]* 3

Islamic Affairs

Islamic World League Council Adopts Resolutions *[Riyadh Radio]* 4

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat on Elections, Syria Track, Jerusalem *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 3 Jan]* 6
Mahmud 'Abbas on Election Criticism, Campaign *[Jericho VOP]* 10
Election Committee Head Explains Changes *[Jericho VOP]* 12
'Arafat Approves Coalition List for Jerusalem *[Jerusalem TV]* 12
PLO's Qaddumi Criticizes Elections *[AL-NAHAR 31 Dec]* 12
UK's Hanley Meets 'Arafat, Signs Aid Agreement *[Jericho VOP]* 13
Intifadah Victim Compensation Likened to Holocaust *[Jerusalem Radio]* 14
Hamas Asks Cairo for Permission To Open Cairo *[AL-MANAR 1 Jan]* 14

Arab-Israeli Talks

Israeli-Syrian Negotiations Continue in Maryland 14
Damascus Reports Resumption of Talks *[Damascus Radio]* 14
Israelis Say 3 Jan Talks 'Most Successful' *[Jerusalem Radio]* 15
Al-Mu'allim Relays al-Asad Vow on 'Terrorism' *[HA'ARETZ 4 Jan]* 15
'Syrian Sources' Say Talks on Timetable *[Jerusalem TV]* 15
'Syrian Sources' on Military Nonparticipation *[London AL-HAYAH 3 Jan]* 16

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Press Predicts Likely Format of New Government *[Kuwait Radio]* 17
Court Deals with 'Terrorism,' Criminality Case *[Algiers Radio]* 17
President Zeroual Signs 1996 Financial Law *[Algiers Radio]* 17

Egypt

MENA Carries New Cabinet List 17
New Cabinet Sworn In, Meets Under Mubarak *[Cairo Radio]* 18

Further Reportage of al-Janzuri Appointment 18
Letter of Designation Published *[MENA]* 18
Mubarak Receives al-Janzuri *[Cairo Radio]* 19
Al-Janzuri Comments After Meeting *[Cairo Radio]* 19
Radio: 'Right Man in Right Place' *[Cairo Radio]* 20
Musa, Butrus-Ghali Begin Official Talks *[MENA]* 20
More on Arrests of Israeli 'Espionage Ring' *[London AL-HAYAH 3 Jan]* 20

Mauritania

Prime Minister Khouna Names New Cabinet *[AFP]* 21

Morocco

Filali on Readiness to Work With UN on Sahara *[Rabat TV]* 21
Minister Reviews Plans for Privatization Bonds *[MAP]* 21
Attempt to Halt Trial of Alleged Arms Smugglers Fails *[Paris International]* 22

Sudan

Government: More Ethiopian Refugees Repatriated *[Omdurman Radio]* 22
Visiting Libyan Official Discusses Mediation Mission *[Omdurman Radio]* 22
Article Describes Army-SPLA 'Heavy' Fighting *[THE NEW VISION 30 Dec]* 22

Tunisia

President Receives Message From Yemeni President *[Tunis Radio]* 23

ARABIAN PENINUSLA

Saudi Arabia

UK To Deport London-Based Dissident to Dominica *[London PRESS ASSOCIATION 4 Jan]* 24
Al-Mas'ari 'Confident' of Appeal *[London BBC TV]* 24
British Officials, Politicians Comment *[London PRESS ASSOCIATION 4 Jan]* 24

IRAQ

Information Minister Relieved; 'Abd-al-Gafur Appointed *[Baghdad TV]* 27
Iranian Mission Enters PUK-Controlled Region *[IRNA]* 27
Paper Warns Iran of 'Consequences' of 'Violations' *[INA]* 27
Deputy Prime Minister Receives Russia's Posuvalyuk *[INA]* 28
Saddam: Citizens Know Leadership Working for Them *[INA]* 28
Paper Prepares People for 'Compulsory' Economic Measures *[INA]* 28
Coming Months Said 'Turning Point' in Embargo Battle *[INA]* 29
Writer Asks Egypt To Help Lift Embargo *[INA]* 30
Formation of 'Arab Front' Urged To Lift Embargo *[INA]* 30
Defense Minister Attends Military College Ceremony *[Baghdad TV]* 31
KDP Reportedly Accepts Supplies From Government *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* 31
First Delivery of Textbooks Sent to Kurdistan Schools *[Baghdad TV]* 31
Progress Reported at Southern End of Saddam River *[AL-THAWRAH 13 Dec]* 31
Army Officer Reportedly Killed in Ambush *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* 31
Letters to UN, League Protest Aircraft 'Violations' *[INA]* 32

ISRAEL

Beilin: Al-Asad-Peres Summit 'Very Important' *[Jerusalem Radio]* 33

Peres: Early Elections If No Progress in Talks *[Jerusalem TV]* 33
Peres on Early Elections, Syrian Talks *[Jerusalem Radio]* 34
Zvili Comments on Peres' Focus on Syria *[HA'ARETZ 3 Jan]* 35
Settlers Laud King Husayn's Warning on Syria *[MA'ARIV 4 Jan]* 35
Abu-Middayn Remarks Spark Calls For Dismissal *[Jerusalem Radio]* 36
Talks With Abu-Middayn Canceled *[Jerusalem Radio]* 36
Peres Comments on Palestinians Revoking Covenant *[Jerusalem Radio]* 36
Beilin: Accord With Palestinians Before Elections *[DAVAR RISHON 3 Jan]* 37
Likud Attempting To Delay Palestinian Elections *[THE JERUSALEM POST 3 Jan]* 37
Sources Deny U.S. Query on Military Sale to PRC *[DAVAR RISHON 4 Jan]* 38
Peres' Bureau Says Espionage Report 'Baseless' *[Jerusalem TV]* 38

JORDAN

Layth Shubaylat Lecture Criticizes King Husayn *[AL-SAFIR 30 Dec]* 39
Popular Committee To Defend Shubaylat Formed *[THE STAR 4-10 Jan]* 42

LEBANON

Al-Murr on Decision To Enter Palestinian Camps *[Beirut Radio]* 43
Cabinet Entrusts Military With Security Duties *[Beirut Radio]* 43
UNIFIL Commander Protests Attacks *[Beirut Radio]* 43
Former Prime Minister Michel 'Awn Interviewed *[Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO 27 Dec]* 44
Islamic Resistance Leader Interviewed *[London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH Jan]* 44
Hizballah Committed To Stop Israeli 'Occupation' *[Paris LE MONDE 3 Jan]* 47

SYRIA

Media Comment on Resumption of Maryland Talks 49
Paper: Talks To 'Shed More Light' *[SANA]* 49
Radio on 'Greater Than Ever' Opportunity *[Damascus Radio]* 49
Press Views Hopes for Talks *[Damascus Radio]* 50
Reportage on Official, Media Remarks on Iran 51
Radio Reports Iran's Velayati Comments *[Damascus Radio]* 51
Hizballah Official Calls Ties 'Strategic' *[Damascus Radio]* 51
Iranian Newspaper Article on Ties Reported *[TISHRIN 2 Jan]* 51

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Dostam, Government First Talks 'Positive' *[Tehran International]* 53
'High-Level' Iranian Team Visits Qandahar *[IRNA]* 53
Hekmatyar Sends Letter to Pakistan on Refugees *[Message of Freedom]* 53
Taleban Rockets Kill 22 in Kabul *[Kabul Radio]* 53
Government Aircraft Bombard Taleban Positions *[Kabul Radio]* 53
Government Suspends Publication of KABUL Weekly *[IRNA]* 54

India

Kashmir Kidnappers Repeat Claim Army Has Hostages *[AFP]* 54
Government Denies Statement *[AFP]* 54
Kashmir Government Denies Claim *[Delhi Radio]* 55
AFP Details Delhi Bombing, Responsibility Claim 55
Radio Says 5 Dead, 23 Injured *[Delhi Radio]* 56
Minister on Foreign Involvement *[Delhi Radio]* 56

Report on UK Citizen Involvement in Arms-Drop Case *[THE TIMES OF INDIA 2 Jan]* 56
Eighth Culprit in Arms-Drop Case Identified *[Delhi Radio]* 57
Twenty-Eight 'Hardcore Militants' Surrender *[Delhi Radio]* 57
Rao's 'Cold Feet' Said To Halt Operation of Agni *[THE PIONEER 3 Jan]* 57
Strike by Government Employees in Kashmir 'Withdrawn' *[Delhi Radio]* 59

Iran

Tehran Threatens Legal Action Over U.S. Decision 59
Protest to UN, ICJ Possible *[IRNA]* 59
Velayati Says U.S. Broke Law *[Tehran Radio]* 59
Qom Rally Held Against U.S. 'Covert' Budget *[IRNA]* 60
Allocation of Funds Urged To Counter U.S. Threats *[IRNA]* 60
Majles Letter Condemns 'Ignorant' U.S. Policies *[Tehran Radio]* 60
Government Boycotts Oscars To Protest U.S. Act *[IRNA]* 60
Paper Says U.S. To 'Regret' Decisions *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 25 Dec]* 61
Velayati on Solving 'Problems' With Syria *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 62
Syrian Envoy on Relations, Peace Process *[Tehran Radio]* 62
Commentary: Syria Facing 'Painful Dilemma' *[Tehran International]* 62
Oil Revenue Said Buoyant Despite U.S. Sanctions *[Tehran International]* 63
Commentary Views U.S. Military Presence in Bosnia *[Tehran Radio]* 63
President Inaugurates New Nuclear Research Facility *[IRNA]* 64
Larijani: Parties Not Successful in Third World *[IRNA]* 64
Segregation of Religion from Politics Discussed *[SALAM 11 Dec]* 65

Pakistan

'Strong Exception' Taken to Indian Minister Remarks *[Islamabad Radio]* 65
Suspect in Peshawar Bombing Said To Escape to Kabul *[THE MUSLIM 4 Jan]* 65
MQM Committee Calls For 'Protest Day' 4 Jan *[MQM NEWS 2 Jan]* 66
MQM Head Vows To Continue Fight for Rights *[MQM NEWS 2 Jan]* 66
Leaders Criticize U.S. Actions Against Iran *[IRNA]* 67
Leghari on India's 'Threat' to Regional Security *[Islamabad Radio]* 67
Bhutto on Trade With India, Domestic Issues *[THE NATION 31 Dec]* 68
Altaf Group 'Terrorists' Killed in Encounter *[Islamabad Radio]* 69
Two Injured, Vehicles Damaged in Karachi Explosion *[Islamabad Radio]* 69
Minister Berates Altaf Hussain for Harboring 'Terrorists' *[Islamabad Radio]* 69
Dubayy Seen as 'Safe Haven' for Drug Barons *[THE NEWS 3 Jan]* 69

Sri Lanka

UN Alerted LTTE May Possess Chemical Arms *[DAILY NEWS 4 Jan]* 71
Police Uncover LTTE Plan To Poison Eelam Group Leader *[DAILY NEWS 4 Jan]* 71
India Bars Entry of Suspected LTTE Sympathizers *[DAILY NEWS 4 Jan]* 72
Telecommunications Center at Kalmunai Destroyed *[Colombo Radio]* 73
LTTE Dispatch Details Fighting in North, East *[TAMIL EELAM NEWS WWW 1 Jan]* 73
Two Provincial Councils Dissolved *[Colombo Radio]* 74

Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

Yemen's Salih, Ethiopian Mediator Comment on Talks

JN0301153096 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic, received Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin, who conveyed a message from Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to the brother president. The message deals with the Ethiopian mediation efforts seeking to bring viewpoints closer and resolve the differences between our country and Eritrea on maritime borders.

The brother president reiterated our country's call for removing the traces of the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir and returning things on the island to their status prior to 15 December. Our country also calls for embarking on peaceful negotiations on maritime borders in keeping with the international cooperation agreement.

The brother president voiced appreciation for the Ethiopian efforts to bring about a final settlement to the dispute between our country and Eritrea [indistinct words] and the interest of the peoples of the region.

The meeting was attended by 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and the Eritrean charge d'affairs in our country.

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', the brother president said: Regrettably, the Eritrean Government does not have a fixed claim. It has not thus far specified the subject of the dispute. At one point, it speaks about a dispute over al-Hanish al-Kabir island. At another point, it speaks about al-Hanish archipelago and Zuqar archipelago. We do not know what claims they will make tomorrow.

He added: How can agreement be reached on arbitration at a time when the Eritreans have not specified the subject of the dispute, whether it is al-Hanish al-Kabir island, the archipelago, or the maritime borders.

He said: What will settle the difference with Eritrea is negotiating the maritime borders. Yemen is ready to resolve the dispute in accordance with the Maritime Law Convention and the provisions of the international law.

Concluding his statement to the YEMENi NEWS AGENCY, SABA', he said: The Republic of Yemen will remain committed to its legitimate sovereign rights in al-Hanish al-Kabir island. The Eritreans' occupation of al-Hanish al-Kabir island will not change the realities on the ground. Nobody sanctions or accepts aggression, occupation of the others' land, or imposition of the fait accompli through force. He noted that Yemen will continue to advocate peaceful solutions to disputes based on its sense of responsibility and proceeding from its care to stave off tension in the Red Sea region — tension that would threaten the security and safety of international navigation there.

The Ethiopian foreign minister left Sanaa at noon today at the end of a brief visit to our country during which he met with Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic, and Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister. He discussed with them the latest mediation efforts Ethiopia is carrying out to contain the problem arising from the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

The Ethiopian official told the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', that his talks with our country's officials were very useful. He said that he believes the situation is moving toward a stage in which a permanent solution to the problem can be reached. He said that he offered on behalf of his country a draft agreement incorporating the views of the Yemeni and Eritrean sides in this regard. He said: What we heard from the Yemeni side was very encouraging. He said he strongly believes that he will receive a similar response from the Eritrean side.

Concluding his statement, he said: The search for a peaceful solution to the unjustified problem concerns not only the Yemeni and Eritrean sides or the mediator; it concerns the peoples of the two countries and their political organizations.

For his part, Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, in a statement to Ethiopian mass media, said the draft agreement proposed by the Ethiopian mediator will be presented to the constitutional authorities in our country.

Asked about the Yemeni position on the draft agreement, Dr. al- Iryani said that the issue concerns the Yemeni constitutional authorities and that he had nothing more to say.

Yemen Official Stresses Sovereignty Over Island

JN0301131096 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 3 Jan 96 pp 16, 20

[Report by Samir al-Hijjawi in Khartoum]

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior Yemeni official stated that Yemen will not abandon its sovereignty over the al-Hanish al-Kabir island, and that the use of force to recapture the island is not ruled out if the Eritreans' intransigence is maintained. He rejected the idea of internationalizing the islands and Bab el Mandeb.

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In a statement to AL-RA'Y in Khartoum, 'Abd-al-Salam al-'Ansi, adviser to the Yemeni president, added: "We will exhaust all peaceful means to resolve the dispute without resorting to military force. But if left with no other choice, we will not abandon our sovereignty."

On whether or not Yemen could agree to an internationalization of the islands, al-'Ansi went on to say: "We are opposed to internationalization. Nobody has officially raised the issue of internationalization. Nobody has spoken about the internationalization of Bab el Mandeb. The official standpoint in this regard is that we do not attach much importance to this issue."

Al-'Ansi said: "We are opposed to the idea of deploying international observers on the island. Yemen is wagering on a supportive Arab stand, because the overall Arab interests are being endangered."

Al-'Ansi expressed concern over the growing Israeli-Eritrean ties, saying: "The strong relationship between Israel and Eritrea is a cause of concern to us. The statement by the Israeli health minister regarding the importance of Israeli-Eritrean ties has provoked us."

The Yemeni official added: "The Eritrean move on the island was premeditated. The talks were an attempt to buy time. We are aware of their conditions and resources. The information we had prior to the attack stated that Eritrea was incapable of undertaking such a move. Boats that were not part of the Eritrean Navy were used in the operation. We fear that the aim of this operation is to internationalize the archipelago of islands located near Bab el Mandeb. Since 1973, the Israelis have been attaching great importance to these islands, particularly since Yemen loaned them to Egypt during the Ramadan war and approved the stationing of Egyptian troops thereon."

For his part, Dr. Mustafa Isma'il 'Uthman, Sudanese minister of state at the Presidential Office and secretary general of the World Popular Friendship Council, told AL-RA'Y that the United States aims to use Eritrea as a cat's paw in the region.

The Sudanese official added: "The military capabilities of a country that is so small and with so brief a history of independence are widely known. So, it would not have embarked on such a move had it not enjoyed the support of other countries."

Dr. 'Uthman went on to say: The information available to us confirms that Israel is supporting Eritrea. This is because Israel's current plan is to be on the offensive rather than the defensive in the Arab region. To do so, it must have presence in strategic locations and on entrances and exits. The Red Sea is one of these locations. That is why Eritrea occupied the island.

The operation epitomized clear appeasement. For Eritrea was holding a dialogue with the Yemeni leadership, which had declared its acceptance of arbitration. However, Eritrea used its troops to occupy the island and force a fait accompli. What happened was an attempt by the big powers to lay their hands over strategic areas, either directly or by proxy. They began with Eritrea.

These islands are Yemeni. They are closer to Yemen than Eritrea. The name of the island in question is Yemeni. I do not believe that Yemenis can accept anything short of the return of the situation on the island to what it was like before the Eritrean attack.

The Sudanese position is clear. The Eritrean aggression is an aggression against a state and its sovereignty. Eritrea should have sought a solution through legitimate peaceful means. It should not have occupied territory.

When asked about the domestic situation in Eritrea and its impact on Sudan, Dr. 'Uthman said: The Eritrean regime is experiencing an economic crisis as well as a crisis related to the recent inception of the state. For Eritrea, a country that has only recently obtained independence, lacks the infrastructures of an efficient state.

The Sudanese official said: People in Eritrea are grumbling because of the deteriorating economic situation and the dictatorial rule of Isaias Afwerki. From the outset, we have noticed the growing promotion of Israeli-Eritrean ties, as well as the secret and announced visits of Isaias Afwerki to Israel. We have cautioned against the repercussions of this. Isaias Afwerki once said that Rabin gave him a piece of advice, telling him that the best way to deal with Arabs is to use force to humiliate them. Otherwise, he would obtain no respect—so Rabin's advice goes.

Dr. 'Uthman added: The United States has accorded special attention to Eritrea. That is why it appointed an assistant secretary of state as its ambassador in Asmara, although Eritrea is a country that has only recently gained independence. It should be recalled that the United States does not have embassies in most world states.

U.S. coordination [with Eritrea] is excessively great. This clearly shows that the United States is planning to use Eritrea as a cat's paw in the region.

With regard to the impact of the domestic situation in Eritrea on Sudan, Dr. 'Uthman said: The United States and Israel are using Eritrea to beleaguer Sudan, weaken the Sudanese regime, and bring opposition groups together. They believe that President Isaias Afwerki is somebody they can count on.

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We have documents proving that Isaias Afwerki supplied southern Sudanese rebels with arms and provided them training. We have videotapes of Eritrean soldiers training rebels on the use of tanks. In the recent Ugandan attack, we apprehended several Eritrean soldiers who were commanding tanks.

Our attitude toward the Eritrean regime is clear. This regime is doing what we expected it to do, but at a faster pace, due to its domestic crises.

The Eritrean aggression will not be confined to Sudan and Yemen. If the Arab states do not awaken to the dangers posed by this regime, Eritrea could become a thorn in the Arab nation's side.

There are Israeli bases in the Dahlak [placename as published] island. Yitzhaq Rabin and Shim'on Peres were scheduled to visit Eritrea and Ethiopia prior to Rabin's murder to express support for the two countries in their fight against Sudan.

U.S. National Security Adviser Anthony Lake has repeatedly said that he wants to use Sudan's neighbors to hassle Sudan, halt its expansion, and weaken the Sudanese regime. That is why U.S. President Clinton received Meles Zenawi, Ethiopian chairman of the Council of Representatives. Clinton did so because of Zenawi's anti-Sudan stands.

English-speaking neighboring countries, which revolve in the U.S. orbit, virtually project a united front against Sudan, whereas all French-speaking neighboring countries maintain good ties with us. Whenever a neighboring country's relations with the United States are disturbed, the way for this country to improve these relations has been by adopting an anti-Sudan stand.

The United States views Sudan as a rebellious country that opposes the U.S. policy line and the new world order. Consequently, it must be beleaguered to bring about a change in its policy—so the U.S. argument goes.

Sudan is a victim of an unprovoked U.S. aggression that began by placing Sudan on the list of the countries sponsoring terrorism. This aggression was stepped up when the United States led a campaign to condemn Sudan at the United Nations and thwarted all peace talks to resolve the southern Sudan problem, not to mention the repeated hostile U.S. statements against Sudan and the U.S. support for neighboring countries to make them beleaguer Sudan, as well as the U.S. efforts to beleaguer Sudan at international economic institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF.

Yemeni Leaders Reiterate Position on Island Dispute

JN0301182096 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Council of Ministers held its regular meeting this morning. The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Abd-al-Ghani.

The council reviewed all developments related to al-Hanish al- Kabir island and the mediation efforts carried out by the brothers and friends aimed at solving the problem resulting from the treacherous Eritrean aggression on the island.

While the council reiterated its thanks for the efforts of the fraternal and friendly countries, it emphasized the official position of the Yemeni Republic which calls for the withdrawal of the aggressor forces from the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir island and returning the situation to what it was before the treacherous aggression. [passage omitted]

Eritrean Coverage of Conflict Over Islands

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For further reportage of the Eritrean-Yemeni confrontation over the Hanish Islands in the Red Sea, including official Eritrean Foreign Ministry statements, please see the East Africa section of the 19 December Sub-Saharan Africa DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Butrus-Ghali, League Chief Comment After Talks

NC0301125396 Cairo MENA in English 1150 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Jan. 3—(MENA)—U.N. Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali said that there is a political will in both Yemen and Eritrea to settle the present dispute between them over Hanish island through peaceful means.

During a press conference following his meeting today with Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Butrus-Ghali said the next few days will witness negotiations between the two countries to solve the crisis.

Butrus-Ghali noted that during his talks with officials in Yemen and Eritrea he felt a sure and mutual wish to settle their conflict in the interest of the Arab and African worlds.

He pointed out that in March 1977, a meeting was held at the Arab League premises in order to activate Arab-African cooperation. He stressed the need to boost this

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cooperation and settle peacefully any dispute that might arise between an Arab and an African country.

Dr. Butrus-Ghali said the aim of his meeting with Dr. 'Abd-al- Majid is to promote ties between the world organization and the regional one according to the UN Charter which stipulates the need to encourage rapprochement between the UN and other bodies.

He said that within the context of this policy, a meeting will be held in the middle of February that aims at coordinating cooperation among all organizations. He added that the Arab League will be re-presented to the meeting.

All regional and world organizations, either military, economic or political will be represented, he said.

He expressed hope that peace would prevail the Arab world and that democracy be boosted within Arab communities.

On the other hand, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid described Dr. Butrus-Ghali's visit as historical, as it is the first by a U.N. secretary general to the Arab league.

He said he discussed with Dr. Butrus-Ghali during their meeting today, a number of issues mainly the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute and efforts exerted by the UN secretary general to solve it through peaceful means and dialogue.

The meeting also dealt with means of easing up the embargo imposed on Iraq, in addition to Libya-West crisis (Lockerbie), conditions in Somalia, and the Western Sahara problem, 'Abd-al-Majid added.

Asked about holding a mini Arab summit to discuss the present situation in Iraq, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said he always calls for holding such a summit to tackle Arab issues. He referred to his call to hold a mini Arab summit when Israel annexed territories in Jerusalem, adding that his call was approved by most Arab countries.

The League secretary general expressed hope for holding a comprehensive Arab summit, but he pointed out that Arab summits are the concern of Arab heads of state.

On cooperation between the League and the United nations to solve the Lockerbie crisis, 'Abd-al-Majid referred to the League's position in support of the Libyan stance and calling for settling the crisis peacefully.

He said Libya recently offered new information to the British Government and Britain appreciated the Libyan attitude which is considered a major step on the way to developing contacts with the British side.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said the Arab League will try, during the coming months, to highlight the Libyan good intent regarding the Lockerbie issue.

He added that he will today meet with a delegation representing the British House of Commons and that he will review with its members the developments of the Libya-West crisis.

He said that he will get acquainted with the British stance vis- a-vis the crisis especially as the Libyan stance complies with the Security Council resolutions and is keen on peacefully settling the crisis.

Islamic Affairs

Islamic World League Council Adopts Resolutions

LD0401013596 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Constituent Council of the Islamic World League [IWL] has completed its 34th session at the headquarters of the league's general secretariat in Mecca under the chairmanship of Saudi Grand Mufti His Eminence Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-'Abdallah-Bin al-Baz, and in the presence of IWL Secretary General Dr. 'Abdallah Bin-Salih al-'Ubayd, and members of the Council.

The Council adopted a number of resolutions and recommendations. The Council stresses its thanks and appreciation for the generous sponsorship by King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, his loyal Crown Prince His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, and his wise government, which plays a great role in providing impetus to the work of the league and its constituent council, and in providing support for Islamic call efforts throughout the world. [passage omitted]

The council stresses the importance of the Muslims' solidarity, unity of word and ranks, and their commitment to the implementation of the provisions of the Shari'ah in all aspects of life, in view of that being the aim and the only way to save them from worry, alienation, and humiliation on earth.

The council reaffirms that Jerusalem is one of the most important issues to Muslims, over which there must be no compromises, which no one must relinquish, and whose inhabitants' rights must be safeguarded.

The Council denounces the U.S. Congress' decision to transfer the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, and urges the kings and presidents of Islamic states to hold fast to Islamic rights regarding the Jerusalem issue and its return to Palestinians as the capital of an independent Palestinian state.

It calls for a firm stand against the Israeli decision on Jerusalem, and calls on the IWL member states to demand appropriate measures to force Israel to stop

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the settlements, the Judaizing of Jerusalem, and the appropriation of Islamic endowments, and not to harm Islamic places and Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem.

The Council urges the IWL member states to support the return of refugees to their homes, and the release of those among them who are being detained.

It also calls for effective participation in the restoration and repair of mosques, and Islamic schools and institutions.

The Council condemns the Israeli aggression against the Ibrahimi mosque, and calls for the coordination and intensification of efforts to remove that aggression.

The Council praises the steadfastness of citizens in the occupied Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, condemns Israeli violations, and calls for unconditional withdrawal from the areas.

It expresses its appreciation for the efforts made by the Muslim peoples and governments which have helped to support the steadfastness of the Bosnian Muslim people and their unique sacrifices, offered in defending their homes against Serb attacks. [passage omitted]

The Council urges the IWL member states and international bodies to offer full support to the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina to rebuild all its structures, and urges Muslim businessmen to contribute effectively in rebuilding everything that has been destroyed by the hateful war. It also urges Islamic institutions and relief organizations to increase their material and financial support to Bosnians.

The Council condemns the Indian forces' action against Muslims and calls for enabling the Muslim Kashmiri people to exercise their inalienable right, as stipulated in the UN Security Council resolutions of 1948 and 1957, and calls for the release of Muslim detainees. [passage omitted]

The Council denounces the persistent Afghan factional disputes, the fighting, and the destruction of the country. It urges the factions to adhere to God's path in their religion and integrity, and to behave justly and charitably.

The Council condemns some states' intervention in Afghanistan's affairs, and calls for the intervention to be stopped immediately.

The Council also calls on the member states of the Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC] to coordinate efforts and adopt a firm stance against those who disobey God's order and the unanimous wish of Muslims, and calls for stopping aid to those engaged in fighting. [passage omitted]

The Council reaffirms its solidarity with the Muslims of the southern Philippines in their just struggle to realize their legitimate aspirations, and welcomes the official talks between the Philippines Government and the Moro National Liberation Front. It calls on the OIC member states and Islamic charitable organizations and individuals to offer assistance to the Mujahedin and their Islamic projects. The Council recommends that the OIC and the IWL follow up the resolutions aimed at uniting the ranks and word of Filipino factions. [passage omitted]

The Council urges the Indian Government to reconsider its attempt to apply the unified personal status law, which contravenes Islamic Shari'ah, to Muslims. It urge the Indian Government to continue to allow Muslims to adhere to Islamic Shari'ah where it concerns their personal status. It also urges the Indian Government to fulfill its pledge to rebuild the Babri Masjid Mosque and provide appropriate protection to other mosques threatened by Hindu extremists.

The Council urges the OIC to set up a liaison committee to resolve the issue of the Muslims of Burma, secure their human rights and freedom, and help them to return to their country. It also urges Islamic organizations to offer the Burmese Muslims humanitarian aid and to support their Islamic projects in their country. [passage omitted]

The council stressed the importance of supporting the Islamic work of Muslims in People's China, particularly in eastern Turkistan. It also called for the halting of Chinese nuclear explosions in it, and the ending of Buddhist influx into Muslim areas. [passage omitted]

The council urged Islamic states to make efforts in east European states to make them respect the identity of Muslims living in their territories, and grant them their legitimate rights.

It called for the provision of material, moral, and scientific aid to the autonomous Islamic republics in Federal Russia, and to establish projects in Muslims' regions.

The council stressed the importance of strengthening relations between Islamic states and the Islamic republics in all spheres, and called for attention to be paid to the conditions of Muslims in the homelands of the Ingush, Ossetians, and Abkhaz, and support their Muslims to achieve their legitimate demands and support their projects.

It stressed its support for the efforts made by the people of Azerbaijan to defend their country against Armenian occupation, and called for efforts to ensure the

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withdrawal of the occupiers, and to help the displaced people and enable them to return to their homes.

The council warned about the alarming proportion of the Christianization activities in those Islamic republics, and called for supporting Islamic education, culture, and teachings amongst their sons.

The council stressed the need for finding a peaceful solution to the issue of Tajikistan, and called on all the sides to the conflict to adhere to Islamic teachings, cooperate and stop the bloodshed.

It condemned Federal Russia's use of force against the Muslim people of Chechnya, called for the bloodshed to be stopped, a peaceful solution to their issue, and the provision of assistance and backing for the Chechens. [passage omitted]

It called on Islamic states to strengthen their relations with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and for all kinds of aid to be provided to renovate and build mosques, schools and institutions, and to revitalize Islamic teachings there. [passage omitted]

The council urged Islamic bodies and organizations to follow up the activities of subversive movements and trends, to warn Muslims against them and confront them by direct Islamic media transmission to explain the teachings of Islam and the falsehood of the claims made by those subversive movements.

The council expressed its appreciation of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al- 'Aziz, the custodian of the two holy mosques, for issuing his noble order for the establishment of an Islamic satellite channel.

It recommended that the OIC member states should boost the capabilities of the Islamic states exposed to an invasion by mercenaries as it had previously occurred in the Maldives and the Comoros. It called for stern international measures to prevent that from happening again.

The council condemned the Ugandan invasion of southern Sudanese territories, and denounced the interventions that threatened Sudan's territorial integrity and supported the separatists' movement in the south.

It called for assisting Sudan to impose its full control over its southern part and end the rebellion by peaceful means.

The council condemned the Eritrean occupation of the Yemeni island of Hanish, and called on the OIC and the Arab League to bring about Eritrea's withdrawal, support the legitimate Yemeni right and take the appropriate measure to prevent the repetition of that in the future.

The council condemned the criminal incident in Riyadh and all other similar incidents everywhere, and prayed to God to protect the security of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its population as well as all Muslim countries from any criminal act. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat on Elections, Syria Track, Jerusalem

MM0301152496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 3 Jan 96 p 2

[Interview with Yasir 'Arafat by Salih Qallab in Gaza; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Qallab] Israel has completed its withdrawal from the Palestinian cities and villages in the West Bank. What is the next step?

['Arafat] First I must point out that the Israeli withdrawal from the city of Hebron will be completed on 28 March. As you know, the Israelis are delaying their withdrawal from the Hebron city proper — because withdrawal from the suburbs and adjacent villages has be completed — on the pretext that the settlers have returned to their homes from which they were evicted after a problem which occurred in 1929.

After the withdrawal from Hebron and, especially, after the presidential and legislative elections, we will have entered a new phase, namely the final negotiations phase which will begin next May.

[Qallab] You had complained about the slow implementation of the Oslo agreements and there was a feeling that the Israelis did not wish to carry out any new withdrawals after Jericho and Gaza. So what happened to make things move so fast after Taba and after the assassination of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin?

['Arafat] The truth is that the negotiations continued between us and the Israelis but the strange thing that raised many questions was the fact that whenever we agreed to begin implementation of the second part of the Oslo agreements according to the decided timetables, a suicide operation occurred, as you know, causing a setback, taking everything back to square one, and freezing everything that had been agreed upon.

Because of all that we began to suspect that it was no coincidence that every one of these operations took place after we reached agreement with the Israeli Government to begin implementation of the second part of the Oslo agreements, until the Beit Lid operation occurred and the members of the group that planned that operation were arrested. They confessed that one

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day before implementation they spent the night in the village of al-Duhniyah in the south of the Gaza Strip on the border with Egypt, a village that was assigned to Israeli agents and was, therefore, under the strict guard and observation of the Israeli security organs which prevented even Israeli patrols from approaching it.

During their interrogation the suspects refused to say who transported those who carried out the Beit Lid operation from al-Duhniyah in the south to Beit Lid where the operation was carried out, or how they managed to bypass all the Israeli roadblocks and checkpoints, which had sophisticated electronic devices, while carrying quantities of arms and explosives supplied to them in that village.

[Qallab] You seem to be implying that the members of the Islamic Jihad Movement who carried out the operation had the support of some Israeli parties linked to the security organs.

['Arafat] I do not make accusations haphazardly. We have much evidence which we will make public when the time comes. For the time being I will just cite what Abishay Raviv, leader of the Israeli extremist movement Eyal, said in an interview published by the newspaper JERUSALEM on 3 November. In that interview, the text of which we are keeping as a document, he said that he met five times with Islamic Jihad Movement leadership officials months before Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi, the movement's leader, was killed and that these meetings took place near the Palestine Hotel on the Gaza beach and were arranged by an agreed liaison man.

[Qallab] Let us go back to our previous question. That qualitative leap in the implementation of agreements, and the withdrawal from the Palestinian cities which followed, came directly after Rabin's assassination.

['Arafat] No, not at all. If Rabin were alive the implementation would have taken place exactly the same way. The progress reflected in the withdrawal from Palestinian cities came as a result of the Taba agreements after hard and strenuous negotiations. These agreements were signed in Washington under the eyes of the whole world.

Here I should point out once more that after signing the Taba agreements in Washington we had our hands on our hearts for fear that suicide operations similar to those carried out in the past might occur. Actually, our security organs made great efforts to control the situation and were able to prevent such operations but, although our organs achieved that, there was disagreement on the Israeli side and the Israeli extremist organizations were able to assassinate Yitzhaq Rabin, our partner in the peace of the brave.

For your information, before Rabin's assassination I had warned repeatedly and publicly against these Israeli extremist underground organizations.

[Qallab] It has been said that you even warned Rabin himself that these organizations targeted him and intended to assassinate him.

['Arafat] Yes, I did warn Rabin about what these organizations might do, and I repeated this warning in a lecture I delivered at Harvard University after the UN 50th anniversary celebrations. My last warning to the former Israeli prime minister was during the economic summit held in Amman at the end of last October.

[Qallab] Some believe that the extremist forces in Israel have retreated since Rabin's assassination.

['Arafat] That is not true. They have not retreated. Their attempts are continuing. They continue to emphasize that they intend to continue to kill Palestinians and Jews who disagree with them regarding the peace process.

[Qallab] Do you expect them to try to assassinate Shim'on Peres as they assassinated Yitzhaq Rabin?

['Arafat] Yes, and I expect that they will carry out terrorist operations against us, that is against the Palestinian leadership.

[Qallab] Do you expect the Palestinian extremist organizations to carry out new suicide operations?

['Arafat] Yes, we foiled one of these operations only two days ago. They have not stopped.

[Qallab] The elections you are to hold shortly are considered to be the main basis for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Do you believe that the Jewish extremists will try to sabotage these elections?

['Arafat] It is not a question of believing. The Israeli extremist factions and organizations have announced more than once that they intend to foil these elections and prevent them taking place by force, especially in Jerusalem.

[Qallab] What about Hamas and the Islamic Jihad Movement? Will they mount operations to abort these elections?

['Arafat] No. About eight Hamas leaders have declared themselves as candidates in these elections, running as independent candidates.

[Qallab] But the Hamas leadership abroad has denied that and criticized those who declared themselves as candidates in these elections in its name.

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['Arafat] Anyway, that is an internal affair which concerns Hamas itself.

[Qallab] Is it true that Hamas has committed itself to a six-month truce during which it would not carry out military operations during the current dialogues in Cairo?

['Arafat] There is no such agreement. We only agreed on the importance of this phase and the importance of national unity at this stage.

[Qallab] You are a main partner in the Middle East peace process. Those who targeted Rabin might target you. Does President 'Arafat feel targeted at this stage?

['Arafat] When was I not targeted? Did Sharon not say that he tried to assassinate me 13 times, even using aircraft?

[Qallab] Let me ask the question directly. Is it true that a Palestinian organization recently planned to assassinate you?

['Arafat] Yes, there was such an attempt and a number of people were arrested...but some Iranian officials denied knowledge of that.

[Qallab] There has been much speculation about the assassination of Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi in Malta. Have your investigations come up with anything regarding that matter?

['Arafat] I am sorry to tell you that Fathi al-Shaqaqi was delivered up to those who killed him. He, may God have mercy on his soul, was martyred in that treacherous operation, but he was handed over [to his killers].

[Qallab] It has been claimed that Musa Abu-Marzuq was also handed over, to the Americans.

['Arafat] I do not want to accuse anyone, but I, like others, wonder what prompted Musa Abu-Marzuq to go to the United States during that critical period.

[Qallab] Is it true that you interceded with U.S. President Bill Clinton to prevent the United States from handing him over to the Israelis?

['Arafat] I did not intercede. When I saw that there was an attempt to hand him over to Israel, I said that he should be handed over to the National Authority because he is a Palestinian citizen and it is responsible for him.

[Qallab] Do you expect him to be released?

['Arafat] I wish it, but if there is an intention to hand him over to Israel, I would insist that he be handed over to the National Authority because he is a Palestinian citizen, under U.S. law.

[Qallab] Is it true that you are a little angry because only one candidate is running against you for the presidential seat?

['Arafat] There were two candidates. One has withdrawn from the battle. That leaves Samihah Khalil. I have met her in Ramallah. I encouraged her and invited her to attend the Palestinian cabinet meeting held there last Saturday after the Israeli withdrawal from there.

[Qallab] Are you happy that a Palestinian woman is challenging a fighting man who spent his life with his weapon on his shoulder?

['Arafat] The Palestinian women are the hawks of the Palestinian people and they shouldered the major burden in the Palestinian intifadah.

[Qallab] With some who are believed to be Hamas elements joining the election battle, do you fear for the majority in the coming legislative council?

['Arafat] No, not at all. Whoever occupies a legislative council seat will be a driving force for the Palestinian cause.

[Qallab] We noticed that in your recent speeches you have increasingly mentioned Fatah.

['Arafat] No, not at all. I mention and stress national unity.

[Qallab] We have also noticed that there are lists posted in the name of Fatah, and some candidates have their photos alongside you.

['Arafat] Fatah has a right to have its own lists. These lists do not only include Fatah members. Their aim is national unity. As regards my photos, thousands of Palestinians keep photos of me with them. Some candidates might see this as an opportunity to publish such photos. I cannot prevent them from doing that.

[Qallab] As you have declared yourself a candidate for the presidency once more, are you not supposed to resign and run affairs as chairman of the Executive Committee?

['Arafat] No. It seems that you are not well acquainted with the law. We are acting like other states where a president does not resign when he intends to be a candidate in the next presidential election, for fear of constitutional vacuum.

[Qallab] Now is the season for the Syrian track. There are those who claim that any progress on the Syrian track would be faced with a freeze on the Palestinian track. Is that true?

['Arafat] We believe that the opposite is true. Any progress on the Syrian track would lead to similar

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progress on the Palestinian track. I have repeatedly said that peace will remain incomplete unless it includes Lebanon and Syria. I have also repeatedly said that we stand by our Syrian brothers until they regain their full undiminished rights.

It is not at all true that progress on the Syrian track would lead to a freeze on our track. Furthermore, the second part of the agreements has mostly been implemented and the Israelis have withdrawn from all the Palestinian cities and most of the villages which make up 31.2 percent of the area of the West Bank and have 98 percent of the West Bank's population.

[Qallab] But the Israelis have not released the female and male prisoners.

['Arafat] They are supposed to be released before the legislative elections.

[Qallab] What has happened to delay their release?

['Arafat] The Israelis are saying that the reason is Israeli President 'Ezer Weizman but we do not know why this has happened, particularly as President Weizman had previously promised to release them. We now await their release.

[Qallab] Do you expect the prisoners to be released before the elections?

['Arafat] That is what is supposed to happen.

[Qallab] Israeli elections are on the way. If the Israeli Likud wins the elections, would you expect the peace process on the Palestinian track to be jeopardized?

['Arafat] Not at all. We did not conclude an agreement with a party. We concluded the agreement with the Israeli Government with the approval of the U.S. and Russian Governments and with many Arab, European, and other foreign states bearing witness.

[Qallab] As we start the new year, when do you expect the Palestinian state to emerge?

['Arafat] The Palestinian state is within a stone's throw. I believe that now you realize that I was right when, as we were leaving Beirut, I said that I saw a light at the end of the tunnel and that I saw Jerusalem's minarets, that the return was near, that we saw it near and they saw it far, but the truth was on our side.

A few days ago we celebrated Christmas under the Western calendar in Bethlehem and in a few days we will celebrate it under the Eastern calendar in Bethlehem. Future Islamic and Christian celebrations will, God willing, be in Jerusalem.

I will never forget what Patriarch Theodoros said in his simple but meaningful Arabic: The successor of Sofronios greets the successor of 'Umar Ibn-al-Khattab.

[Qallab] While on the question of Jerusalem, is it true that you and the Israelis have some ideas regarding the holy city?

['Arafat] Yes, there are Israeli ideas and Palestinian ideas. When the time comes for negotiations on that matter we will submit our ideas and they will submit theirs. I expect that in the end we will achieve a solution satisfactory to both sides.

[Qallab] Does that mean that the negotiations on the future of Jerusalem are in progress?

['Arafat] No, but there are ideas, suggestions, and seminars.

[Qallab] The formula of the Vatican in Rome was repeatedly raised in the past as a solution for Jerusalem.

['Arafat] Yes, and I am still suggesting that formula. Rome is the capital of the largest state in the world, namely the Vatican state and it is also the capital of the Italian sate.

[Qallab] Are you here talking about Jerusalem as a whole or about East Jerusalem?

['Arafat] I am talking in this case about our Jerusalem, that is East Jerusalem which was occupied in 1967 and to which UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 apply.

[Qallab] The negotiations on the final solution will cover four issues: Jerusalem, the settlements, the borders, and the refugees. Which of these, Mr. President, is the most difficult issue?

['Arafat] Jerusalem will be the most difficult. That is not to underestimate the difficult refugees issue which is under study by a Palestinian-Egyptian-Jordanian-Israeli quadripartite committee which has underscored UN Security Council Resolution 194.

[Qallab] There is some talk about resettling the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, or Syria. Has the question of resettling the refugees been raised?

['Arafat] It has not and we will not allow it to be raised.

[Qallab] Is there any response to the possibility of repatriation of the refugees, even, as they say, for humanitarian reasons?

['Arafat] We do not wish to talk about that issue at this time.

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[Qallab] You have talked a lot about a Palestinian financial empire but all this time has passed and we have seen nothing of that Palestinian financial empire.

['Arafat] There has been some investment but it is a slow process. I actually understand the viewpoint of the Palestinian capitalists in this connection.

[Qallab] It is claimed that the slow pace is a result of the absence of investment laws.

['Arafat] There are such laws. We have published them and numerous views have been expressed about them. I believe that it is time for the Palestinian investors to come in with all their capabilities following the liberation of the West Bank.

[Qallab] Are you satisfied with the aid of the donor states?

['Arafat] There have been many promises but little has been done.

[Qallab] Even within the low limits?

['Arafat] Within the low limits we got what we were promised.

[Qallab] What about the position of the U.S. Congress on the issue of Jerusalem?

['Arafat] Regrettably, the position of the U.S. Congress runs contrary to all UN resolutions on Jerusalem, so much so that they stand against President Clinton on that matter.

[Qallab] What is the reason, so long as there is a solution and peace?

['Arafat] The reason is the pressure of the Jewish lobby in the United States, which is controlled by extremist forces.

[Qallab] We notice that there is some Arab delay in opening missions with the National Authority.

['Arafat] We appreciate our brothers' circumstances. We do not want to put pressure on them and we do not want to push them prematurely toward taking a step they do not wish to take.

[Qallab] You will visit the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia within days. What is the agenda for that visit?

['Arafat] My visits to Saudi Arabia have been continual. We are continuously in consultation with our Saudi brothers on all developments pertaining to the Palestinian question, but my visit this time will be for the purpose of reassuring myself about the health of the custodian of the two holy mosques for whom, as Palestinians, we have a special regard and with whom I have links of amity and respect. May God keep him safe for the Arabs, the Muslims, and for his fraternal Saudi people.

Mahmud 'Abbas on Election Criticism, Campaign

JN0301134196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0520 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Mahmud 'Abbas, head of the Higher Central Election Committee, by Fathi al-Barqawi; place not given; from the "A New Day" news feature—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Barqawi] Brother Abu-Mazin, [Mahmud 'Abbas] good morning.

['Abbas] Good morning to you.

[Al-Barqawi] The Higher Central Election Committee [HCEC] announced yesterday that the [election] campaign period, which was postponed until the end of the week, could start immediately. Why?

['Abbas] Because after we reopened the door to nominations, the time for the election campaign decreased. Instead of 22 days it became only two weeks. Many candidates had already launched their election campaign while others abided by the date set. This is unfair to the latter group. To be fair to all, we declared that election campaigns could start to give them as much time as possible so that all sides would have equal time for their election campaign and no one would be harmed by the law. That's why, going beyond the confines of the law, we allowed this to safeguard the candidates' interests. Of course, this does not affect the period set for filing objections concerning the new candidates for the five new seats which we recently were given.

[Al-Barqawi] Usually, talking to brother Abu-Mazin has a special flavor. I will be frank. Did the strongly worded criticism by some international observers have any impact on your decision?

['Abbas] Well, frankly speaking, most of the criticism was a result of misunderstanding and was not based on facts. The observers actually drew our attention to the above point in particular. We studied it from the legal aspect to see if we could do something in favor of the candidates. When we found this was possible, we responded. That's why we mentioned in our statement that we took into consideration the viewpoint of the international observers. This is not a shameful thing. It is not shameful if we take the observers' point of view into account when we change or amend any stand in service of the candidates and the election campaign.

[Al-Barqawi] Carl Lidbom, head of the EU Observers Unit, criticized the curtailment of the time period given for the election campaign?

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['Abbas] Yes. I am not saying that we complied, but we took into consideration this criticism.

[Al-Barqawi] He also said that the shortening of the period complicates the task of the independent candidates and the representatives of the opposition. Is this true?

['Abbas] No. This does not apply to either the opposition or the independent candidates. We can never accept the harming of any candidate, whether he is an independent, from the opposition, or any other group. We treat all equally. As an evidence of this, when we were asked about election propaganda on the radio and television, we said: If you can give all the same time and opportunities, then do it. Otherwise, do not give anyone any time. We insist on this viewpoint with respect to the radio so that we will not harm anyone.

[Al-Barqawi] We will discuss this issue, the issue of the radio and television in detail later on. When you decided on the 14-day period, did you believe it was sufficient for the election campaign?

['Abbas] The fact is that we were forced to do so in view of the provisions of the law. The law says 22 days to be preceded by objections, by the closure of the door to nominations. When we reopened the door to nomination, the period decreased. Therefore, we found it necessary to open the door to objections to be lodged to the HCEC or to the courts. This shortened the period. We combined the two periods, that during which objections can be submitted against the new candidates and the period allocated for the election campaign. That is why we allowed the election campaign to start as of today to last 20 days.

[Al-Barqawi] Is there an explanation for the Palestinian Authority [PA] increasing the seats in the Legislative Assembly?

['Abbas] The number of seats in the assembly was a topic for bargaining. It was the result of an agreement between the PA and the Israeli Government. This is not strange and is no secret. The number began with 25, was raised to 30, 50, to 80 and to 83. But, when the number of people in the various areas was discussed it was found that some areas were unjustly treated. Brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], at an early stage, had officially asked the Israeli Government to give him five new additional seats. But, the Israeli Government procrastinated in giving its reply. This made us launch the election campaign because we were bound by dates and by the law. Then, suddenly, we got the approval. When we got the approval, we wondered what to do with the five seats. Either we leave them for by-elections that will take place two to three months after the assembly is established, or we reopen the door to nomination. We saw it was more suitable to reopen the door to nomination. We were criticized on this point. We were told: Why did you not open the door only in the constituencies which were given these additional seats? Our reply was that we wanted to give all the constituencies another chance so that no one would say that because an additional seat was given to Jerusalem, this could be viewed as a gift to Jerusalem. The same applies to Hebron, Gaza, Khan Yunus. These these constituencies would appear to be privileged. To avoid this, we gave all another chance for nomination. In spite of this, only a few nominations were made in the other constituencies. Some say: You have opened the door to nomination to amend some of the Fatah lists. I do not want to defend Fatah because I find no need to do so. What I know is that no changes have been made on the lists submitted by either Fatah or the other factions. This makes us affirm that the door to nomination was reopened to serve all parties and to fill five new additional seats from which the various areas would benefit, even those areas which felt they have been unjustly treated when the seats were distributed.

[Al-Barqawi] There are some who say that this measure was made to give seats to some candidates, and this was like an accusation?

['Abbas] We did not give the seats to specific candidates. We gave them to specific areas. When we give Gaza one or two seats, this means we give a seat to the city of Gaza. When we gave a seat to Jerusalem, we did not give it to a person. There are 61 candidates in Jerusalem for seven seats. Therefore, it is not guaranteed that any person who is nominated will be elected. Such talk is unfounded. On this occasion, we would like to say that we view the assembly as a whole. We want it to succeed. We do not want this or that person to succeed or to fail. Thus, what we want is the success of the Palestinian people, and the success of the Palestinian experiment. We do not care for names, persons, parties, or groupings because the homeland is more important than all.

[Al-Barqawi] How should the Palestinian Radio and Television Corporation deal with the candidates. We would like you to comment on this as HCEC head?

['Abbas] The radio and television should deal with the candidates on equal footing. If the radio and television can give one or two minutes to candidates, they should give equal time to all, free of charge.

[Al-Barqawi] This is what we will do. We will give each candidate three opportunities, during which he can speak for two minutes....

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['Abbas, interrupting] and free of charge, so that no one will feel he has been unfairly treated because he is an independent or belongs to a specific faction. Candidates should be given the same amount of time and allowed to say what they want. Otherwise, we will quickly protest to the authority. We will monitor this.

[Al-Barqawi] Have you received any complaints concerning the radio?

['Abbas] We received several complaints that the television has favored some people. After questioning the television director and investigating the matter, I found these complaints to be unfounded.

[Al-Barqawi] We are ready to study all complaints. A last question, brother Abu-Mazin that might not be related to your being the HCEC head but as a Palestinian leader. Palestinian women were not given the role they deserve in the nomination process. There are only 22 women from the 700 candidates?

['Abbas] The women are supposed to act. The door is open to them. No one has placed any restriction on the nomination of women, whether within parties or as independents. Women, themselves, should be blamed for not running in the elections. They are the ones to blame. We want women to represent half the society and more than this. The question should be posed to women. Why do they not participate with force and at least in a manner that reflects the status women have and their effective participation.

[Al-Barqawi] There is a women's march today, Wednesday, called for by many institutions to protest against the parties which did not include as many women as needed in their election tickets. This is similar to what you have asked women to do?

['Abbas] They should struggle with all means to improve their situation. I do not imagine that anybody can offer them anything as a gift. They should fight for their rights

[Al-Barqawi] Brother Abu-Mazin, good morning.

Election Committee Head Explains Changes

JN0301212196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 2000 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, head of the of the Central Election Committee [CEC], met for the first time in Ramallah this evening with Carl Lidbom, head of the international observers.

The meeting comes following a statement made by the international observers of the European Union in which they criticized the CEC performance.

The meeting dealt with all issues related to the elections, including the legal amendments, the change in the number of Legislative Assembly seats from 83 to 88, election campaigning, and the difficulties facing the elections in general.

Abu-Mazin explained the reasons for the amendments to the Election Law and its time schedule, and the reasons for increasing the number of Legislative Assembly seats.

He also discussed the difficulties the elections will face in Jerusalem if post offices are opened to the public on election day on 20 January.

At the end of the meeting, it was agreed to hold a series of meetings.

Lidbom met with CEC members in the past, but this is the first meeting with the new committee head.

In a telephone contact with Lidbom, he expressed satisfaction with the meeting during which discussions dealt with all issues that needed explanation from the CRC, as he said.

'Arafat Approves Coalition List for Jerusalem

TA0301190496 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed Palestinian sources told our correspondent Kayid Zahir that, at a meeting held today in the Gaza Strip attended by Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat and some members of the Fatah Central Committee, it was decided to form a final coalition list for East Jerusalem. The list includes Ahmad Quray', alias Abu-Ala'; Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir; Ahmad Hashim al- Sughayyir from Fatah; Zahirah Kamal from FIDA (Palestinain Democratic Union); and Dr. Emil Jarju'i for the Christian seat. The sources added that two seats remain: one for a Muslim candidate and the other for a Christian candidate. Talks are continuing to fill these two seats.

PLO's Qaddumi Criticizes Elections

TA0301180696 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 31 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Munir 'Abd-al-Rahman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, QUDS PRESS — Faruq Qaddumi, alias Abu-al-Lutf, head of the PLO Political Department, expressed his "strong reservations" about the Palestinian council elections slated to be held on 20 January. He pointed out that the elections will deprive many strugglers who gained this achievement from reaping its fruits.

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In a statement to QUDS PRESS, Qaddumi described the Palestinian elections as premature and said that some time must pass so that Palestinian society will adjust itself to the new conditions and accept such an experience, which he said is "essential". Qaddumi stressed that "he is not calling on people to boycott the elections, but that he is only describing a stage that Palestinian society is experiencing." [passage omitted]

Qaddumi stressed that the elected Palestinian council will not have the authority to change articles of the Palestinian National Covenant. He said that the political and legislative reference point of this council is the PLO. He added that the elections "are local elections that will produce a local government which will be part of the Palestine National Council [PNC] and the PLO Executive Committee." He stressed that the elected council will not have the right to amend or change PLO decisions nor the National Covenant. Qaddumi pointed out that "the elections law stipulates that the Palestinian council is part of the PNC, "the PLO's parliament," and therefore cannot have the same rights as the PNC. [passage omitted]

Qaddumi affirmed that the issue of his return "is not relevant at present." He said that he conditions his return on the complete withdrawal of the Israeli army from the Palestinian territories and the Palestinian Authority's [PA] assumption of its sovereign responsibility over all the territories. He added that PLO cadres and leaders cannot return to the self-rule areas without obtaining the Israeli authorities' approval. [passage omitted]

With regard to his view on the results of the PA's dialogue with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] which was held in Cairo recently, Qaddumi expressed the belief that the two groups had achieved harmony. He described the political disagreements between Hamas and the PA as fundamental. He said that everyone knows what Hamas wants and what the PA practices in accordance with the Oslo agreements. He pointed out that the dialogue between them will not be able to achieve more than "respect for the principle of dialogue and an agreement not to use weapons."

UK's Hanley Meets 'Arafat, Signs Aid Agreement

JN0401114296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1000 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat is currently conferring in Gaza with Jeremy Hanley, the British minister of state for foreign and commonwealth affairs. The meeting deals with areas of cooperation and ways of extending British support for the Palestinian people and National Authority. The British minister will also visit a number of projects sites in the National Authority areas implemented with British assistance.

The National Authority and the British Government have signed an agreement in the office of Public Security Director Major General Nasr Yusuf this morning. The $2 million agreement deals with establishing a communications network for the civilian police in the West Bank. More in the following report from 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza:

[Begin al-Za'nun recording] Public Security Director Major General Nasr Yusuf, representing the National Authority, and Jeremy Hanley, the British minister of state for foreign and commonwealth affairs, have signed an agreement in Gen. Yusuf's office in al-Saraya in Gaza this morning.

According to the agreement, Britain will extend $2 million to the National Authority to establish a communications network for the civilian police in the West Bank, connecting the West Bank's towns and villages.

Gen. Yusuf thanked Britain for its assistance to the National Authority and its police and security forces. Gen. Yusuf told the Voice of Palestine that the British Government expressed readiness to offer assistance to establish the police apparatus. He said today's agreement will provide for establishing a communications network for civilian police and extending training for police cadres.

Gen. Yusuf said that this communications network will be linked to another communications network in Gaza, pointing out that the French Government is now participating in establishing the Gaza communications network.

For his part, Mr. Hanley expressed his happiness for signing the agreement in Gaza and said that the aid for the National Authority will arrive within the next few days. Hanley stated that communications are vital to coordinate operations of maintaining law and order during the upcoming Palestinian elections, which will be fair elections. He said that international observers will help in the smooth running of the election process. He described the police work as difficult.

The signing ceremony was attended by Major General 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Majayidah, chief of national security; Brigadier General Ghazi al-Jabali, director of Palestinian police; and the British consul general.

Mr. Hanley is scheduled to meet with President Yasir 'Arafat at the Presidency in Gaza this afternoon. [end recording]

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Intifadah Victim Compensation Likened to Holocaust

TA0401081996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 4 Jan 96

[Report by Dani Zaqen]

[FBIS Translated Text] The issue of the Palestinian prisoners release is particularly important for the Palestinian Authority [PA] in view of the approaching elections and the need to demonstrate an achievement in that field, too. Ministers Sarid and Liba'i will meet with Nabil Sha'th and Furayh Abu-Middayn today at the District Coordination and Liaison Office at the Erez checkpoint to discuss the prisoner release and the extradition of terrorists who carried out attacks in Israel.

In an interview with Qol Yisra'el, Abu-Middayn, the PA official in charge of justice, voiced anger at the extradition demand, announcing: Israel sends undercover units into the autonomous areas and has so far abducted four Palestinians in Gaza and Khan Yunus.

[Begin Abu-Middayn recording, in English] Israeli secret groups came to Gaza, and they arrested four people here, in Gaza town and in Khan Yunus, and they sentenced them to life imprisonment in Israel. [end recording]

The four were sentenced to life imprisonment in Israel, he says, and we asked that they be sent back to us so that we can deal with them according to the agreement.

He further said that Israel has requested the extradition of seven Palestinians, including four who had perpetrated terror attacks prior to the establishment of the autonomy and two who had already been sentenced in Gaza.

Referring to Israel's rejection of the claims for damages for the Palestinian intifadah victims, Abu-Middayn resorted to an analogy that is bound to grate on Israeli nerves: You received billions of marks from Germany, he said. Why should you refuse to compensate those you harmed during the intifadah?

[Begin Abu-Middayn recording, in English] While Israel accepted billions of marks from Germany, Israel refuses to give compensation to those people who lost their sons, or lost their eyes, or lost their legs, or their [word indistinct]. [end recording]

As for the prisoner release, Abu-Middayn contends that Israel's refusal to discuss the release of certain categories of prisoners, such as those who have served more than two-thirds of their prison terms and people over 50 and under 18, is a deliberate violation of the Taba agreement. Abu-Middayn charges: The ministers of the Israeli Government, which has recently taken a turn to the right, make their decisions in Jerusalem and then come to meetings with us only to inform us of their decisions.

Despite the complaints and charges, however, the release of some 1,100 Palestinian prisoners can be expected following today's meeting or in the next few days, just days prior to the Palestinian council elections.

Hamas Asks Cairo for Permission To Open Cairo

TA0301175796 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 1 Jan 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] The Egyptian Government is currently studying a request by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] to open an office in Cairo. The office will focus its activities on the information aspect and will not carry out any sort of opposition Palestinian political activity from Cairo.

Informed sources in the Egyptian capital said that the overall Egyptian perception on whether to agree to Hamas' request will depend first of all on the positive results expected to be achieved through the dialogue between Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority. The first round of this dialogue ended recently in Cairo. In addition, Hamas' future tendencies in terms of its participation in realizing the National Authority's commitments within framework of the peace process with Israel will also be taken into acçount. This was one of the fundamental points in the dialogue meetings in Cairo.

The Hamas delegation that took part in the dialogue with the Palestinian Authority submitted the abovementioned request to the Egyptian authorities while it was in Cairo. The delegation was led by Khalid Mash'al, acting head of the movement's political bureau.

Political circles in Cairo expect that at least in the short-term the Egyptian Government will put off a decision on this matter because that is premature. Moreover, there are other considerations which the government must take into account. These considerations fall within the framework of relations between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, which is officially outlawed in Egypt.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Israeli-Syrian Negotiations Continue in Maryland

Damascus Reports Resumption of Talks

JN0301214596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2125 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington—The Syrian-Israeli peace talks resumed in Maryland near Washington today.

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Nicholas Burns, spokesman for the U.S. State Department, said the U.S. Administration hopes that the talks taking place in Maryland will revive anew the peace efforts between Israel and Syria.

He added that this means tackling all essential and main issues that are under discussion, and coming out with procedural methods to advance these talks.

Israelis Say 3 Jan Talks 'Most Successful'

TA0401055196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is to join the Israeli-Syrian talks taking place at the Wye Plantation outside Washington. U.S. officials said the secretary of state's decision to join today's talks was part an intensified effort to make progress towards peace in advance of his trip to the Middle East next week.

Israeli officials said they were satisfied with yesterday's talks, which they described as the most successful so far. Officials in Jerusalem, who are close to the negotiations, said that concrete progress had been made and not just in the tone of talks. Officials have played down prospects for a dramatic announcement on Friday [5 January], the final day of the second round of talks at the Wye Plantation.

Al-Mu'allim Relays al-Asad Vow on 'Terrorism'

TA0401111096 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 4 Jan 96 pp A1, A2

[Report by 'Aqiva Eldar in Washington]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] With the resumption of the negotiations with Syria at the Wye Plantation in Maryland, Israeli sources reported that Walid al-Mu'allim, the head of the Syrian delegation, said last week that once Syria and Israel reach a peace arrangement, the terrorist organizations will be prohibited from staging operations against Israel from Syrian and Lebanese territory. The second round of talks began in Maryland yesterday and will continue until tomorrow afternoon.

Al-Mu'allim stressed that Israel can trust Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad to keep his word on this matter, just as he does with regard to all his other commitments. According to the Israeli source, during the present round of talks Israel will expect Syria to use its influence with Hizballah in order to calm down the situation along the northern border.

The senior Israeli source said that it had been made clear to the Syrians that progress toward an arrangement will not come at the expense of the Palestinians and that Israel has no intention of putting the negotiations on the permanent arrangement with the Palestinians on the back burner. [passage omitted]

Israel and Syria have agreed to expand the "core teams" of the negotiations in an attempt to broaden the agenda of the security discussions. Israel seeks to include Major General 'Uzi Dayan, the head of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Planning Branch, in the talks in a bid to renew the security discussions within the framework of the current round of talks.

The security discussions were halted in June 1995, following a single meeting between Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq and his Syrian counterpart, Hikmat al-Shihabi. A source close to the negotiations said that of all the senior Syrian defense officials, al-Asad trusts al-Shihabi the most. Expanding the delegations will also enable the United States to send a Pentagon representative to the talks.

As for expanding the talks on regional economic cooperation, Israel wants to incorporate Finance Ministry Director General David Brodet in the delegation. 'Oded 'Eran, Foreign Ministry assistant director general in charge of economics, will deal with widening the framework of countries contributing to the peace agreement with Syria. [passage omitted]

An Israeli source pointed out that Syria and Israel have already declared that they prefer the "core teams" model. The same source expressed the assessment that next month, after Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region and the conclusion of another round of talks, it will be possible to determine whether a peace agreement is attainable prior to the elections in the United States and Israel.

Israeli delegation head Uri Savir said that the talks could end tomorrow with a joint statement by the three parties.

'Syrian Sources' Say Talks on Timetable

TA0301193996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian sources have said that deliberations have started in the Maryland talks on a timetable for a Golan withdrawal, without discussions on the scope of the withdrawal. Our Arab affairs correspondent Ehud Ya'ari quotes the sources as saying that Syria refuses to cooperate with Israel on economic projects on the Golan Heights since it rejects any sign of the occupation.

The Syrians want to reach an agreement this week on a timetable for the talks, since they say that the framework

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for discussions on the water issue have already been decided.

'Syrian Sources' on Military Nonparticipation

MM0301135596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 3 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by Ibrahim Humaydi: "Damascus Refused To Include Its Military Experts in Recent Round of Negotiations With Israel"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus — Informed Syrian sources in Damascus have confirmed to AL-HAYAH that Syria refused to allow Syrian military experts to participate in the recent round of negotiations with Israel, held in Maryland, near Washington, last week. It was hinted that their participation "depends" on the outcome of the "unofficial" consultations which the two delegations held yesterday with the U.S. peace team on the eve of the resumption of the negotiations.

The sources pointed out that Syria refused to allow the experts to participate "even though the Israeli delegation included two security experts" beside the delegation's head Uri Savir, Israeli Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovic, and the legal expert Yo'el Zinger. Syria refused last July to resume the negotiations at military expert level because of the Israelis' demand for a ground early-warning station on the Golan. It could be understood that the warning station issue has not been settled yet because the Syrians made it conditional that the demand for a ground warning station be abolished and replaced by the airborne warning option and that what was agreed by Syrian Chief of Staff General Hikmat al-Shihabi and Israeli Chief of Staff Amonon Shahaq last June be accepted. The sources reemphasized that the Syrian delegation "is not discussing the withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines, because that is a Syrian right."

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Algeria

Press Predicts Likely Format of New Government

LD0301174496 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia has concluded his consultations on forming a new Algerian Government, which is expected to be announced today or tomorrow, Thursday.

Press sources in the capital Algiers say that four new ministries are to be created in the spheres of developments and social security. They say that some 15 ministers, members of the previous government, will retain their ministerial portfolios, while 15 new ministers will enter the government.

These sources add that most of the ministers are young — not over 40 years old — in order to give the development process in Algeria a new push.

Court Deals with 'Terrorism,' Criminality Case

LD0301173896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In its final ordinary session in 1995, the criminal court in Bechar yesterday imposed a 15-year prison sentence on the accused Boutrad Mohamed. There were also other sentences, which we follow in Houria Ouled Bensaid's report:

[Bensaid] In its session yesterday, the court dealt with a case connected with terrorism and criminality, involving a group composed of 11 people, who appeared yesterday before the court on the charges of organizing, belonging to, financing, encouraging, and running an armed group in Bechar. [passage omitted]

President Zeroual Signs 1996 Financial Law

LD3012130295 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Liamine Zeroual this morning signed the financial law for 1996. The signing ceremony was attended by Transitional National Council Chairman Abdelkader Bensalah; Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi, and the minister counsellor, secretary general, and head of the presidential office. Members of the government also attended the traditional ceremony of signing the financial law for the New Year.

The Transitional National Council has already approved the financial law for the New Year. [passage omitted]

Egypt

MENA Carries New Cabinet List

NC0401072096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2305 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 Jan (MENA) — Following is the composition of the new government:

Dr. Kamal Ahmad al-Janzuri	Prime Minister
Dr. Yusuf Amin Wali	Deputy Prime and Minister
	of Agriculture and Land Reclamation
Dr. 'Amal 'Abd-al-Rahim 'Uthman	Minister of Insurance and Minister of State for Social Affairs
Engineer Sulayman Mutawalli Sulayman	Minister of Transport, Communications, and Civil Aviation
Engineer Muhammad Mahir 'Uthman Abazah	Minister of Electricity and Energy
Field Marshal Muhammad Husayn Tantawi Sulayman	Minister of Defense and War Production
Muhammad Safwat al-Sharif	Minister of Information
'Amr Mahmud Musa	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Dr. 'Atif Muhammad 'Ubayd	Minister of the Public
Business Sector	
Dr. Ahmad al-Juwayli	Minister of Supply and Internal and Foreign Trade
Counselor Faruq Muhammad Sayf-al-Nasr	Minister of Justice
Faruq 'Abd-al-'Aziz Husni	Minister of Culture
Dr. Mahmud Sayyid Ahmad Sharif	Minister of Local Administration
Dr. Husayn Kamil Baha'-al-Din	Minister of Education
Dr. Hamdi 'Ali 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Banbi	Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources
Major General Hasan Muhammad al-Alfi	Minister of Interior
Dr. Yusuf Butrus Ghali	Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs for Follow-up of Economic Affairs
Dr. Mamduh Ahmad al-Biltaji	Minister of Tourism
Engineer Muhammad 'Abd-al-Hadi Radi	Minister of Irrigation
Kamal al-Shadhili	Minister for People's

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Assembly and Consultative Council Affairs	
Dr. Muhammad Zaki 'Abu-'Amir	Minister for People's Assembly and Consultative Council Affairs
Dr. Engineer Muhammad Ibrahim Sulayman	Minister of Construction, Housing, and New Urban Communities
Dr. Venice Kamil Judah	Minister for Scientific Research
Dr. Engineer Muhammad al-Ghamrawi Dawud	Minister of State for War Production
Ahmad Ahmad al-'Amawi	Minister of Manpower
Dr. Muhyi-al-Din al-Gharib	Minister of Finance
Dr. Nawal al-Tatawi	Minister of Economy and International Cooperation
Dr. Isma'il Sallam	Minister of Health and Population
Engineer Sulayman Rida	Minister of Industry
Dr. Hamdi Zaqzuq	Minister of Awqaf
Counselor Tal'at Hammad	Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs
Zafir al-Bishri	Minister of State for Planning

New Cabinet Sworn In, Meets Under Mubarak

NC0401105896 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The members of the new cabinet took the constitutional oath in front of President Husni Mubarak at the Presidential Office today. Only Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi was absent from the ceremony because he is abroad.

The swearing-in ceremony began with Prime Minister Kamal al-Janzuri, followed by the deputy prime minister, and then the rest of the ministers. Dr. Zakariya 'Azmi, director of the President's Office, attended the ceremony.

The new cabinet then held its first meeting under the chairmanship of President Mubarak.

Further Reportage of al-Janzuri Appointment

Letter of Designation Published

NC0301181496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1700 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 Jan (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak has affirmed that the task of the new government is to continue the march of reform, development, and progress and to build on what has already been achieved in these fields and consolidate it so that the Egyptian community can move on to new horizons.

In the letter of designation he addressed to Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri yesterday, President Mubarak underlined the need to develop a future vision of Egypt in the 21st century, which is witnessing a profound transformation in science and technology. At the same time it faces new challenges and growing fears as a result of the collapse of the world order that was firmly in place since the end of World War II. The following is the text of the letter of designation:

"Dr. Kamal Ahmad al-Janzuri: Greetings.

"You are aware that the country has encountered harsh challenges over the past few years in view of the successive developments in the Middle East and the world at large. We had to face these growing challenges with a panoramic vision that addressed the general, essential issues as well as with a well-studied, scientifically-planned program based on developing a national consensus on the higher national goals and mobilizing all the human and material energies and resources to serve these goals.

"To this end, an exhaustive economic reform program was drawn up, taking into consideration our unique social and economic conditions and national priorities. We focused on increasing production and productivity, encouraging new projects to create growing job opportunities, giving the private sector the chance to contribute to the process of development, achieving a tangible increase in exports, reducing the deficit in the state budget, and achieving a surplus in the balance of payments. In the meantime, we sought to consolidate the infrastructure, rehabilitate the production base, enhance defense and security capabilities, and consolidate stability all over the beloved homeland.

"The government has gone a long way in drawing up and implementing the economic reform plans. Our struggling people proved that they have the highest sense of responsibility, awareness, concern about the higher national interests, and preparedness to make sacrifices for them.

"As a result, the early stages of economic reform achieved a degree of success that many states with similar conditions have failed to achieve. It now remains for us to build on this success and accomplishment and to continue with reform in a new stage, in which efforts will focus on increasing production, creating job opportunities at a growing rate that is in line with the yearly growing number of job seekers, and raising the standard of basic services, primarily the educational,

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health, and cultural services. All this should be done without adding to the burdens of people with limited means in society.

"This new stage of economic reform requires developing a long-term vision of Egypt's future in the 21st century; a century that will witness giant transformations in science and technology and will face new challenges and growing fears resulting from the collapse of the world order that was firmly in place since the end of World War II. This has introduced the world to a transitional period of anxiety that generates various forms of conflicts and violence.

"Knowing your high degree of efficiency, vast experience, wise judgment, and ability to succeed, we decided to entrust you with the task of forming a government that is capable of completing the march of reform, development, and progress by building on, adding to, and consolidating what has already been achieved, so that we can take Egyptian society to new horizons in the context of the broad lines and tasks included in my speech to the People's Assembly at the opening of the seventh parliamentary session.

"I fully trust that you and your colleague members of the Council of Ministers will make every possible effort to achieve these goals and respond to the people's aspirations for more construction, growth, and progress.

With my best wishes for success.

[Signed] Muhammad Husni Mubarak

Cairo, 11 Sha'ban 1416 Hegira, corresponding to 2 January 1996.

Mubarak Receives al-Janzuri

NC0301190596 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak received Prime Minister Designate Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri this evening.

After the meeting, Dr. al-Janzuri said that he will meet later this evening with the new ministers and those who will stay on in the new cabinet.

Al-Janzuri added that he prepared a list of the new cabinet members and that he will announce the formation of the new cabinet once president President Mubarak approves the appointments. He also said that he will head for the Council of Ministers to announce the formation of the new cabinet.

MENA has learned that the new cabinet will be sworn in before President Mubarak in the Presidential palace in Heliopolis tomorrow and that President Mubarak will chair the first meeting of the new cabinet tomorrow after the oath-taking ceremony.

Al-Janzuri Comments After Meeting

NC0301192096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1844 GMT 3 Jan 96

[News conference by Prime Minister Designate Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri with unidentified correspondents after a meeting with President Mubarak in the presidential palace in Heliopolis on 3 January — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Janzuri] After obtaining his Excellency the President's approval of the formation of the new government, I am on my way now to meet the ministers and welcome the new members and all the colleagues who are staying on. Let us go to the Council of Ministers and see.

In general, I can say that there are seven or nine new ministers. Certain ministries have been merged.

[Correspondent] How many?

[Al-Janzuri] Three ministries will experience a merging process. There will be a merging process in the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, in the Ministry of Transport and Communication, and in the Ministry of Education. Each of these ministries included two or three ministries. The same minister will now take charge of the ministry and the other ministries will be merged into one.

[Correspondent] What is the goal of that merge?

[Al-Janzuri] The goal is to step up the pace of economic and social performance to serve the Egyptian masses.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Al-Janzuri] Tomorrow we hope, God willing.

[Correspondent] What are the priorities of the new government?

[Al-Janzuri] As I said yesterday, the tasks were spelled out in the president's speech at the People's Assembly on 16 December. The speech expressed all of Egypt's aspirations in the field of economic and social development in all sectors. The stage will start this year and continue until the beginning of the 21st century, God willing. The details included in the speech constitute the program of the new cabinet.

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Radio: 'Right Man in Right Place'

NC0301124696 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1105 GMT 3 Jan 96

["News Analysis" by 'Azzah 'Abd-al-Rahman]

[FBIS Translated Text] Observers unanimously agree that by designating Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri to form a new government, President Husni Mubarak is putting the right man in the right place. Al-Janzuri has helped maintain economic stability in Egypt as economic transformation nears completion. He is one of the leaders who links transformation to a free economy with the conditions of the poor classes. He wants to see a balance between Egypt's special domestic circumstances and the demands of the international funding establishments. Observers, therefore, describe Dr. al-Janzuri as the engineer of Egypt's economic reform program.

President Husni Mubarak has defined the basic objective of the economic reform program in line with values that put the interests of the Egyptian people before all other priorities, perpetuating social justice in Egypt's life as a basic foundation of government legitimacy. The program seeks to achieve high and constant economic growth rates, reduce inflation, and ensure sufficient foreign currency reserves to improve citizens' social conditions, especially among the low-income classes.

Since the economic reform program was launched, Dr. al-Janzuri, as chief of planning, has worked to create a balance between the available resources and the requirements of the economic reform policy — an increase in growth and a decrease in inflation. The aim was to prevent sudden change in the economy, be it growth or decline, as this would harm the interests of Egyptians. Egypt's economic reform policy aimed to consider such factors as national production, the labor force, meeting the needs of the growing population, and improving social conditions.

Musa, Butrus-Ghali Begin Official Talks

NC0301140596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1335 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 Jan (MENA) — Official talks started in the Foreign Ministry at noon today between Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali. The talks deal with developments in the Middle East peace process in light of efforts to achieve progress on the various tracks.

Musa and Dr. Butrus-Ghali will examine the situation in the Middle East and the Gulf in light of Gulf efforts to persuade Iraq to agree to sell part of its oil.

Dr. Butrus-Ghali will brief Musa on his recent contacts with Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki to contain the dispute over the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir in the Red Sea and find a peaceful, negotiated solution.

Minister Musa and Dr. Butrus-Ghali will also review proposals to develop the United Nations and expand Security Council membership, in addition to international developments and Egypt's occupation of the Arab seat in the Security Council for two years starting this year.

The meeting will also discuss the UN role in implementing the peace agreement in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

More on Arrests of Israeli 'Espionage Ring'

MM0401110696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 3 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Muhammad Salah: "Ring Spying For Israel Arrested"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed Egyptian sources have said that security services have recently uncovered an espionage ring working for Israel in Egypt. The sources pointed out that the accused are being interrogated by the Higher State Prosecution Office under the supervision of Counsellor Hisham Saraya, attorney for the prosecution, and that General Prosecutor Counselor Raja' al-'Arabi will issue a decision within a few days to refer them to court.

The sources told AL-HAYAH that an Egyptian from al-'Arish, Sinai, named 'Amir Salman, was arrested a few days ago, and that he confessed that he is a member of the ring working for Israel and that he had made contacts with officials in the Israeli intelligence service (Mosad), supplying them with "strategic" information in return for helping him to smuggle quantities of drugs into Egypt across the border with Israel.

The sources pointed out that the accused confessed that the information he supplied to the Israelis focused on Egyptian activities in Sinai and reports on Egyptian intentions with regard to commitment to the peace agreement signed with Israel.

The Prosecutor's Office charged the ring with "working and spying for a foreign state, namely Israel, to harm the country's political, economic, and military status."

The report submitted to the Prosecutor's Office by the Egyptian State Investigation Office on the activities of the ring's members included details of their movements, saying that "they frequented Israel through certain border points to hold meetings with Israeli intelligence officials, were assigned specific tasks, trained in intelligence operations, received a radio system and a special

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cipher, and sent and received messages through this system." Judicial sources have pointed out that punishment for these charges could go as far as execution.

Mauritania

Prime Minister Khouna Names New Cabinet

AB0301213396 Paris AFP in English 1909 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nouakchott, Jan 3 (AFP) — The new prime minister of Mauritania, Cheikh El Afia Ould Mohamed Khouna, named his government Wednesday [3 January], drafting in four new ministers and dismissing three others. Political observers said the cabinet line-up suggested a continuation of Boubakar's liberal economic policies, which began four years ago.

With the exception of the rural development and environment portfolio, given to Sow Abou Demba, all of the key ministries — interior, defence and foreign affairs — did not change.

The new prime minister, who succeeded Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubakar on Tuesday, is replaced in his previous post as minister for fisheries and maritime economy by Baba Ould Sidi.

Entering the government for the first time are Kamara Aly Gueladio (public health and social affairs), Boidiel Ould Houmeid (commerce, handicrafts and tourism) and Seniya mint Sidi Haiba (secretary of state for women's affairs).

The three outgoing ministers are Sghoire Ould M'Bareck (public health and social affairs minister), Timera Boubou (rural development and environment) and Mariem mint Ahmed Aiche (women's affairs).

No official reasons were given for Boubakar's departure, but an informed source said his departure would pave the way for "a more politically solid team" to prepare for elections.

Mauritania's opposition has been calling for the dissolution of parliament since the first multi-party elections in 1992, which it boycotted. They want a new electoral code, guarantees of an independent judiciary and an impartial administration.

Morocco

Filali on Readiness to Work With UN on Sahara

LD0301220896 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Abdellatif Filali, prime minister and minister of foreign affairs and cooperation, has reiterated Morocco's readiness to continue its cooperation with the United Nations with regard to holding a referendum in the Western Sahara in accordance with the UN settlement plan. During a meeting in Rabat this evening with envoy Chinmaya Gharekhan, the UN under secretary general and main adviser to Mr. Butrus-Ghali, Abdellatif Filali said that the settlement plan remains the essential framework for every action undertaken by the UN secretary general with a view to solving the problems he encountered with the other side [Polisario Front] in order to speed up the identification process.

Moreover, Mr. Filali highlighted the eagerness of his majesty's government to have the referendum held as soon as possible. He also expressed his regret about the successive delays which have taken place so far.

For his part, Mr. Chinmaya Gharekhan highlighted the cooperation the UN has always received from the Kingdom of Morocco, and expressed the hope to see Morocco continue its support for this cooperation, in order to provide the settlement process with a chance to progress.

Mr. Chinmaya Gharekhan was accompanied by Erik Jensen, personal representative of the UN secretary general in charge of the Western Sahara issue; Rolf Knuttson, head of the UN secretary general's cabinet; and Mrs. Louise Laheurte, personal assistant to the assistant secretary general for political affairs.

Minister Reviews Plans for Privatization Bonds

LD0301160896 Rabat MAP in English 1257 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Casablanca, Jan. 03 (MAP) — One of the priority goals of issuing privatization bonds in Morocco is the improvement of meeting subscription demand by individuals, Moroccan minister of the privatization of state owned enterprises Abderrahmane Saidi said here Tuesday.

The privatization bonds are a great event in the history of economic reforming in Morocco, the minister explained at a press conference, specifying 70 pc [percent] of the bonds are reserved to individuals and the quota will go up to 85 pc and the rest can be acquired by legal entities.

The bonds will entitle people purchase shares in public enterprises to be sold at the stock market during the coming three years, Saidi added and the move will help control share demand as well as increase liquidity at the bourse of Casablanca.

The minister recalled that the cumulative funds earned through privatization operation up to the end of 1995 was 7.4 billion dirhams [dh] (one dollar is a little less than nine dirhams) and cumulated commitments by investors was 2.2 billion dh.

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He specified that the participation of local contractors in the revenues of the 22 companies and 17 hotels privatized was 65.4 pc and the rest by foreign investors.

The privatization plan includes the Samir oil refining plant, the state owned oil company (SCP), the National Bank for Economic Development (BNDE), the steel manufacturing company of Nador (Sonasid), Banque Populaire and the fertilizers firm (Fertima), the minister said.

Attempt to Halt Trial of Alleged Arms Smugglers Fails

LD0301190996 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Morocco, the military court in Rabat has just confirmed that criminal proceedings will continue against 13 people, 9 Moroccans and 4 Algerians, accused of being involved in an arms smuggling operation on behalf of Algerian armed Islamist groups, including the GIA [Armed Islamic Group].

Today, the second day of the trial, the defense again argued for several hours that there are irregularities in the case against the accused, producing evidence to back their arguments, but to no avail. It should be remembered that the accused are facing up to 20 years in prison.

Sudan

Government: More Ethiopian Refugees Repatriated

EA0301192396 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The seventh group of Ethiopian refugees in (Tawawa) camp west of al-Gadarif, eastern Sudan, on the morning of 3 January was repatriated to (Khawajah) camp in Ethiopian territory. This was part of the voluntary repatriation program involving Ethiopian refugees organized by the UNHCR.

A coordinator of the voluntary repatriation program in al-Gadarif announced that the group comprised 750 refugees, adding that the total number of refugees repatriated from (Tawawa) camp now stood at 4,900 out of a total 100,000 registered for voluntary repatriation. He stressed the voluntary repatriation operations were going on as planned and the program would end on 3 March when all those registered would have been repatriated. [passage omitted]

Visiting Libyan Official Discusses Mediation Mission

EA0301222596 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The President Lieutenant General Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, on 3 January, in his office at the Republican Palace met Mr. Abubakr Yunis, a member of the Libyan revolution's leadership council and the delegation accompanying him.

After the meeting, Mr. Abubakr announced that relations between the leadership of the two fraternal countries were of those of a common struggle, brotherly, solid and deep. He said the Libyan delegation visited the country so as to join the Sudanese people in commemorating the glorious independence anniversary and to attend the historical celebration marking the convening of the first Sudanese National Congress. The visit also came in the context of the brotherly, bilateral Arab and African relations between the two fraternal countries.

His Excellency said his meeting with Lt Gen al-Bashir was part of Libya's mediation to end the border tensions between Sudan and the states of Eritrea and Uganda, and in order to bring an end to these problems given Libya's interest in fraternal Sudan and its territorial integrity. He said all sides had not rejected this mediation despite the existence of mutual misunderstanding between Sudan and Uganda. He added Libya's mediation sought to alleviate this situation and bring about mutual understanding.

Article Describes Army-SPLA 'Heavy' Fighting

EA0301154396 Kampala THE NEW VISION in English 30 Dec 95 p 1

[Article by Emmy Allio: "SPLA Battles Over Oris Headquarters"]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Heavy fighting broke out on Christmas eve [24 December] between the rebel SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army] and the Sudan Government Army near the headquarters of Col Juma Oris West Nile Bank Front (WBNF) in Morobo, western Equatoria, rebels have said.

Gunfire sounds from the two-hour battle at Morobo, about 12 miles from the Uganda border, could be heard from the border areas in Arua district. Hundreds of civilians at Bazi on Zaire/Sudan border and in Koboko County in Uganda reportedly fled to Zaire while others fled into Uganda. There was no official confirmation on the number of people who fled into Uganda. [passage omitted]

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A secretary for culture and information, Mr Pa'gan Amum, said yesterday on the telephone from Nairobi that the fighting broke out when Sudan Government troops attacked SPLA positions in areas west of Mudri.

"Our forces repulsed them with heavy losses. They thought they would take advantage of the Christmas festivities to attack us. We intend to flush them out of Morobo," Amum said, adding, "the number of the dead and injured is to be availed later on." [passage omitted]

The consul at the Sudanese Embassy in Nairobi, Mr 'Ali Sadiq, said there has been "little" fighting with the rebels recently. "There is no fighting for weeks now on all fronts. Our troops are on holiday. You see, many government soldiers are Christians," he said.

Tunisia

President Receives Message From Yemeni President

LD0201164396 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali received a message from Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih.

The message was conveyed to him this morning at Carthage Palace by Yahya Husayn al-'Aarshi, Yemeni minister of culture and tourism; and the Yemeni's president private envoy to his excellency the president.

Yahya al-'Arashi said that the message was connected with the existing conflict between Yemen and Eritrea since 15 December over the Greater Hanish island. He said in this respect that the Yemeni president was exerting efforts to consult with his brothers, the leaders of fraternal countries, for more coordination on this issue.

He also pointed out that Yemen was looking for all possible peaceful means to find a solution to this issue, then [holding] a dialogue over the border between the two countries. [sentence as heard]

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Saudi Arabia

UK To Deport London-Based Dissident to Dominica

LD0401061696 London PRESS ASSOCIATION in English 0450 GMT 4 Jan 96

[Report by Amanda Brown, chief political correspondent, PA News]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Government has ordered the deportation of Saudi Arabia's leading dissident to a tiny Caribbean island, after pressure from the Saudi regime, the US government, and British arms companies.

Muhammad al-Masari, leader of the influential London based Islamic opposition group the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights, who applied last year for political asylum in Britain has been given 10 days to appeal against his removal to Dominica or report to Gatwick airport on January 19, according to The Guardian.

He escaped from Saudi Arabia via Yemen and tonight the Home Office told PA News: "We refused the application without substantive consideration, on the grounds there is a safe country that he could be sent.

"He has 10 days to lodge an appeal and he won't be removed until any appeal has been heard."

A government attempt to deport the Saudi dissident back to Yemen was blocked earlier this year by the Immigration Appeals Tribunal on the grounds that his life would be in danger there.

Al-Mas'ari 'Confident' of Appeal

MS0401100396 London BBC Television Network in English 0700 GMT 4 Jan 96

[Interview with opposition leader Dr. Muhammad al-Mas'ari by Andrew Harvey in London; from the "Breakfast News" program — live]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Harvey] Mr. Mas'ari first of all are you surprised by the government's action?

[Mas'ari] Yes we were actually shocking — shocked we did never thought that in spite of all political considerations that the Home Office is so directly and so massively influenced with political considerations in considering asylum cases.

[Harvey] So you believed they have taken this action because of pressure from Saudi Arabia?

[Mas'ari] Yes, we believe that and think the media covered that very extensively.

[Harvey] Mr. Mas'ari, what do you think are your chances of success in your appeal?

[Mas'ari] We are quite confident that the British judiciary is quite independent, balanced and fair. So we are very well confident that we will succeed in appeal, the same way we succeeded in the question concerning the deportation to Yemen.

[Harvey] In a sense you cannot have been surprised of this reaction, because you have mounted fierce attacks, haven't you, on the Saudi government and the royal family....

[Mas'ari, interrupting] Can I have the question again?

[Harvey] You have mounted fierce attacks on the Saudi government and the royal family. You can't be surprised at the reaction now?

[Mas'ari] You mean the royal family?

[Harvey] Yes, the reaction both from Saudi Arabia and then from the British government?

[Mas'ari] I think that Saudi be celebrating in this moment, I think they will be celebrating too early, because even if we are deported to the moon we will continue our struggle [sentence as heard]. On the British government I am a little bit disappointed, I thought that Britain is still having their moral commitment and the ethics of a superpower, and I thought they should have been able to find a more reasonable place than — what's the name again — Dominica which I have never heard in my life, Australia, Canada or something like that, so it shows how much weaker and less acceptable is the British intervention and influence in even previous colonies.

[Harvey] Mr Mas'ari thank you very much.

British Officials, Politicians Comment

LD0401125896 London PRESS ASSOCIATION in English 0842 GMT 4 Jan 96

[Report by Rebecca Maer, PA News]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A leading Saudi Arabian dissident facing deportation after pressure from the Saudi regime, the US government and British arms companies, was today confident of winning an appeal against the move.

Mohammed al-Masari, leader of influential London-based Islamic opposition group the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR), said he was shocked by the Government's decision to expel him to a Carribean island.

Mr al-Masari, who applied for political asylum in Britain last year after escaping from Saudi Arabia via Yemen, has been given 10 days to appeal against his

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removal to Dominica or report to Gatwick airport on January 19.

The CDLR has accused the Saudi royal family of corruption and wants to replace it by peaceful means with an Islamic government.

Mr al-Masari told BBC1's Breakfast News that even if he was deported to the moon, he would continue his fight.

"We were quite shocked. We never thought that the Foreign Office was so influenced by political considerations in asylum cases," he said.

"I thought that Britain still had the moral commitment and the ethics of a superpower and I would have thought that they would find a more reasonable place than Dominica, which I've never heard of in my life.

"We are very confident that we will succeed in appeal in the same way we succeeded in the question concerning my deportation to Yemen."

A Government attempt to deport Mr al-Masari back to Yemen was blocked earlier this year by the Immigration Appeals Tribunal on the grounds that his life would be in danger there.

Mr al-Masari, 49, said that he believed the decision to deport him had been made because of pressure from Saudi Arabia and that the royal family there would "be celebrating".

But Home Office minister Ann Widdecombe told the programme: "We have had a difficult balancing act."

Referring to Saudi Arabia, she said: "We have close trade relations with a friendly state which has been the subject of considerable criticism by Mr al-Masari."

Mrs Widdecombe added that the appeal would be considered, like any other, by a "completely independent adjudicator".

Under the Immigration Act, refugees can be deported to a safe third nation if they did not come to Britain from the country where they risk persecution.

Labour MP George Galloway is reported by The Guardian as having written to Home Secretary Michael Howard about the matter.

He is said tc have described Mr al-Masari's deportation as a "sordid act of obeisance to the arms dealers in Britain and the dictators in Riyadh".

Mrs Widdecombe denied that Britain had been put under intense direct pressure by the Saudis to expel Mr al-Masari but acknowledged that his campaign had complicated relations with Saudi Arabia.

"There has not been the sort of direct, almost blackmailing pressure that he has been indicating," she told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

"But what we do know is that his activities have been complicating our relations with the Saudis and we have had various representations from people in British business and the Saudis about the situation."

The Government had to assess what was "in the best interests of Britain as a whole, what is in the interests of this person and how can we match the two".

She added: "If people come here and use our hospitality in order to attack extremely friendly governments with whom we have good diplomatic and very good trade relations, we have a very difficult balance to strike.

"On this occasion we have concluded that British interests as a whole do require his removal."

Sir Ivan Lawrence, Tory chairman of the Commons home affairs committee, defended the decision.

"We have to strike a balance. Most people would say that if foreigners want to come to this country they are very welcome, but they can't use this country as a base for causing a great deal of ill-feeling to friends," he said.

"We have not sent him back to Saudi Arabia, where he might be banged up or worse, and if he doesn't want to stay in Dominica, that is fine. There are plenty of other countries that he might, as a fundamentalist, wish to go to.

"We cannot allow our friends to be insulted by somebody who has come here simply to make mischief."

Tony Banks, Labour MP for Newham NW, told PA News: "My reaction is one of anger because this is us being completely pressurised by the Saudis and being prepared to send this guy off because of our relations with Saudi Arabia.

"Damn his civil rights - business is more important, particularly business with a very nasty and unpleasant regime.

"That is the price of political and human rights in this country and the arms bill with Saudi Arabia," the MP added.

Ken Livingstone, Labour MP for Brent East and whose constituency includes Willesden where Mr al-Masari has been living, told PA News: "I think it is absolutely disgraceful.

"What you have is the British Government being prepared to sacrifice someone's interests in order to suck up to the Saudis.

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"Once you have accepted someone has the right to be here, you cannot then impose on their free speech and human rights.

"Our arms manufacturers have obviously been saying they are worried the Saudis are going to cancel some of our arms contracts."

Mr Livinstone added that the Saudis had "the most backward medieval regime on this planet".

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Information Minister Relieved; 'Abd-al-Gafur Appointed

JN0301183896 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Two republican decrees were issued today relieving Culture and Information Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi of his post and appointing him adviser at the Presidential Office with the salary and allowances of a minister, and also appointing 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur as minister of culture and information. Following are the texts of the two decrees:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.
The Republic of Iraq
Republican Decree No. 1

Based on the provisions of Paragraphs D and E of Article 58 of the Constitution, we have decreed the following:

1. Hamid Yusuf Hammadi shall be relieved of his post as minister of culture and Information.

2. He shall be appointed as adviser at the Presidential Office with the salary and allowances of a minister.

Written in Baghdad on 12 Sha'ban 1416 Hegira, corresponding to 3 January 1996.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn, president of the republic

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.
The Republic of Iraq
Republican Decree No. 2.

Based on the provisions of Paragraph D of Article 58 of the Constitution, we have decreed the following:

'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur shall be appointed minister of culture and information.

Written in Baghdad on 12 Sha'ban 1416 Hegira, corresponding to 3 January 1996.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn, president of the republic

Iranian Mission Enters PUK-Controlled Region

LD0301174296 Tehran IRNA in English 1557 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Salahuddin, Iraq, Jan. 3, IRNA — The second phase of a visit to northern Iraq of an Iranian mission started with the arrival of the delegation in Irbil which is controlled by Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

The delegation, headed by 'Ali Aqa Mohammadi, in the first part of its visit to the region, entered northern Iraq on Saturday and was warmly welcomed by the residents of Kurdish cities of Diyanah, Choman, Shaqlawah, Salahuddin, Dahuk and Zakho, which are under control of Mas'ud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

The head of the Iranian mission during his tour of northern Iraq also met with Kurdish people and officials and discussed the current situation in the region.

Aqa Mohammadi in a gathering of thousands of the people in Dahuk who called for Iran's continued peace efforts in the region assured them that Iran would continue its peace efforts to end fighting in northern Iraq.

Meanwhile, the KDP chief, Mas'ud Barzani, in an interview with IRNA before the Iranian delegation's departure for Irbil, described as positive his lengthy talks with Aqa Mohammadi.

Barzani hoped the current visit of the Iranian delegation would bear outstanding results for both Iranian people and Iraqi Kurdish community.

Paper Warns Iran of 'Consequences' of 'Violations'

JN0401095696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0735 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 4 Jan (INA) — AL-THAWRAH warns the Iranian regime of the consequences of its serious and continued violations of Iraq's sovereignty by repeating its official contacts with outlawed cliques in northern Iraq.

In an analysis today, AL-THAWRAH, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says: Iraq has repeatedly warned the Iranian regime to stop playing with fire lest its hands should burn in the flames which this regime wants to fan.

An official Iranian delegation, led by Mohammadi, an expert at the Iranian Higher National Security Council, infiltrated illegally into Iraqi territory last Sunday, and met with Kurdish factions in northern Iraq.

AL-THAWRAH asserts that political opportunism, double-dealing, and maneuvering still characterize the behavior of the Iranian regime. This regime thinks that plots, contacts with agent cliques, and support for them could conceal the nature of the criminal targets pursued by the Tehran regime against Iraq's security, sovereignty, and aspirations.

The newspaper adds: Any party that wants the region to enjoy security and stability would not interfere in the

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affairs of others and would respect the sovereignty of other nations. Otherwise, there is no credibility to what is being said about respect for international norms and laws, whatever the justifications.

AL-THAWRAH says this Iranian conduct — in spite of repeated warnings to respect the sovereignty of others — confirms beyond doubt that its evil intentions are not different from the stands of the other conspirators. This is because the Iranian regime deceives itself by thinking that contacts with the miserable rebels in northern Iraq would achieve gains for it at the expense of Iraq's unity, steadfastness, and cohesion in the face of forces of aggression and domination.

An Iraqi Foreign Ministry spokesman vehemently condemned the official Iranian delegation's infiltration into northern Iraq and its meeting with agent Kurdish cliques.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH advises the Iranian regime to stop interfering in Iraq's domestic affairs and to show goodwill as an honest prelude to a serious dialogue and improvement of ties. This way, the two countries will resolve all outstanding issues between them and achieve true security, peace, and stability.

Deputy Prime Minister Receives Russia's Posuvalyuk

JN0401092496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0807 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 4 Jan (INA) — Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz met here today with Viktor Posuvalyuk, deputy foreign minister of the Russian Federation. The two officials reviewed bilateral ties and stressed the desire of the two sides to promote these ties to serve the national interests of both friendly countries and peoples.

The meeting also addressed Iraq's relationship with the Security Council and the role of the member states in having the Security Council fulfill its reciprocal obligations toward Iraq, primarily lifting the unjust blockade. The two sides stressed the importance of continuing contacts on all levels in the next stage to discuss joint action in all fields.

The meeting was attended by Riyad al-Qaysi, Foreign Ministry under secretary; the Russian ambassador in Baghdad; and the head of the Organizations Department at the Foreign Ministry.

Saddam: Citizens Know Leadership Working for Them

JN3112133095 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1143 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 31 Dec (INA)— President Saddam Husayn has said that our people are certain that their leadership is working for them and for their prosperity and dignity. Addressing the 46th session of the Council of Ministers, President Saddam Husayn stressed that our people are also aware that we spent all oil revenues on them and on building this edifice which the evil ones tried to demolish. The evil ones, he said, were only able to create difficult living conditions for the Iraqis, but these conditions are temporary.

His excellency said: While discussing any decision or any economic or social measure at the Council of Ministers, we must bear in mind the psychological condition of our people. We must bear in mind, in particular, the psychological condition of the largest number of our people, that is, the limited-income people, whether employees or non-employees. President Saddam Husayn added: In order for our people to understand the social and development dimensions of any decision, step, or budget planning we must clearly and precisely explain these dimensions to them, because we depend on the national asset which we have achieved with them throughout this march.

The Council of Ministers discussed, during this session, the topics on the agenda which include steps aimed at diversifying resources and encouraging investments, as well as some organizational matters. The Council of Ministers took the necessary decisions and measures on these topics.

Paper Prepares People for 'Compulsory' Economic Measures

JN0301103096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0735 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 3 Jan (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH states that the message His Excellency President Saddam Husayn addressed to the Council of Ministers on 3 December is a call for examining the negative repercussions of the unfair embargo and remedying the bottlenecks it has created.

In an editorial today, the paper, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, adds: This message is aimed at straightening out the economic state of affairs in Iraq, enabling the Iraqi people to survive the sanctions, and creating additional resources to end the current bottlenecks. The message also aims to enable state organs to handle the compulsory measures that might

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be forced in the future due to the continuation of the sanctions. This scenario will remain intact until Iraqis force their wishes, and until the crossing to safe shores is achieved.

The paper goes on to say: The message of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn includes a practical, realistic, and exhaustive conception explaining how the state of affairs under the sanctions can be remedied. The remedy in question must produce a state in which those enforcing the unfair embargo are beleaguered. Iraqis must have the ability to cope with the embargo and break it. How they can do this is explained through the ideas and remedies in the message, and also in the discussions the message promotes. The message aims to tackle the current adverse effects of the embargo, and outlines the economic decisions that need to be made, as well as the adjustment, economizing, and patience required on both the popular and official levels to curb the negative phenomena expected to emerge and remain with us for some time due to the continuation of the sanctions.

The paper says: Implementing the ideas enshrined in the president's message and translating them into tangible moves and courses of action based on economizing is impossible to achieve by quick measures and official work alone. Achieving this requires greater patience, additional sacrifices, and an enlightened willingness to endure further hardship and burdens, based on the awareness that these burdens are transient and phased, and that there will be greater relaxation thereafter, when the embargo will become a thing of the past.

The paper adds: It is important that the masses make a vigorous effort to promote the plan to tackle the adverse impact of the sanctions, because this would help state officials come up with mature economic measures to address the problem. Citizens must be vigorously involved in the tasks ahead, which are curbing inflation, reducing government spending, and enforcing a moratorium on new investment projects.

AL-THAWRAH goes on to say: A large measure of accuracy in the accomplishment of the national tasks enshrined in the message of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn is required. Accuracy is a trait that must be seen in the official moves to implement directives, and also in the popular effort aimed at supporting implementation mechanisms. People must pool their resources, and their creative potential must be unleashed. This is necessary if serious efforts are to be made to tackle the requirements of the next phase. All this must be coupled with patience, a high sense of responsibility, a dynamic interaction with reality, farsightedness, wisdom, and sound judgment. State officials must demonstrate these characteristics when they contemplate measures to address the crisis.

AL-THAWRAH urges state officials to discuss the ideas enshrined in the message so that the new economizing measures they may propose would achieve the purposes intended by His Excellency President Saddam Husayn, namely, promoting the welfare of the people by containing economic bottlenecks.

The paper adds: The proposals must be balanced. They must aim at economizing and easing the citizens' burdens, particularly in the area of necessities and not luxuries. First, the required relaxation must be attained, and then the negative repercussions of the sanctions must be contained. Once this happens, the brazen economic warfare launched against the Iraqi people by the U.S. enemy, which is more ruthless than military aggression and the subsequent chapter of treachery and treason, must be neutralized.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: Iraq's willpower has defeated adversaries in all previous malicious chapters with an efficiency attested to by others. Thanks to the measures taken by their wise leadership and patience, Iraqis are now capable of forcing their will and defeating the will of evildoers and aggressors regardless of the direction from which they may come and of the hostile purposes they mean to achieve.

Coming Months Said 'Turning Point' in Embargo Battle

JN3012124295 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0830 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 30 Dec (INA)—An Iraqi newspaper has urged world states and governments to reflect seriously on the Iraqi people's tragic conditions caused by the continued embargo imposed unjustly on them for over five years.

In an editorial today, the newspaper AL-'IRAQ says: It is high time that the world put an end to the unjust embargo and closed a chapter of aggression against the Iraqi people and their national sovereignty.

The paper says: As they bid farewell to 1995, the Iraqi people will continue to demonstrate steadfastness, defiance, and patience so that they may continue to be the guardians of their freedom, national sovereignty, and independent decisions.

The paper points out that the campaign of steadfastness and defiance by the Iraqi people throughout 1995, which is drawing to a close, was replete with sincere national interaction and rich with historical scenes that will remain alive in the pan-Arab and national conscience

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as evidence of the strong Iraqi action in the face of the unjust embargo and hostile schemes launched against Iraq and the Arab nation.

The paper stresses that the Iraqi people are determined to safeguard the significance of their honorable steadfastness until the enemies and the covetous plotters surrender and admit their defeat in the face of this Iraqi stance, which is unprecedented in human history, and lay down the terrible weapons brandished in the face of our ancient people.

The paper continues: It is about time the United States understood that the Iraqi people, whose civilization dates back 6,000 years, cannot be isolated on a besieged island in a bid to cancel their ancient history and accomplishments from the book of humanity and wipe out their prominent and influential status in the Arab family, the Arab Gulf region, and the international community as a whole.

Concluding, AL-'IRAQ emphasizes the determination of the Iraqis and their leadership to pursue their campaign with confidence to make the coming months a turning point in the decisive battle of ending the unjust embargo and wiping out its detrimental effects.

Writer Asks Egypt To Help Lift Embargo

JN0101103696 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0930 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 1 Jan 1996 (INA) — In an article published by AL-THAWRAH newspaper, a prominent Iraqi journalist notes the statements and hints of Egyptian officials in support of Iraqi rights. The journalist asks Arab Egypt to turn these statements into an official position at the Security Council.

In an article published today by AL-THAWRAH, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, Iraqi journalist Diya' Hasan says: The popular and official Egyptian position in support of Iraq is a positive step that inspires optimism and expectation that it will be followed by practical steps inside the international organization toward lifting the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The Iraqi journalist asserts that the Iraqi-Arab demand that the blockade be lifted should top the agenda of the Security Council without any restrictions or delay. This is because the international organization should support the right of peoples to live a normal life, without pressures and aggressive practices.

The Iraqi writer notes Egypt's role and capabilities, especially since it assumed today a nonpermanent member seat at the Security Council. This will enable the Egyptian brothers to transform their wishes into concrete reality. By doing this, Egypt would enhance its national, pan-Arab, and international status.

We are waiting for Arab Egypt to do this, since it assumed an influential position in the international organization. This goodwill step would not be forgotten. The first pressing task of the Egyptian envoy is how to act to crystallize a new position inside the Security Council that responds to Iraq's demand for lifting the blockade.

Formation of 'Arab Front' Urged To Lift Embargo

JN3112130195 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0740 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 31 Dec (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH says that this year witnessed important developments on the road to crystallizing an Arab and international stand against continuing the embargo imposed on Iraq.

In an article published today, AL-THAWRAH, which speaks on behalf of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says that the official stands of most Arab countries called, in varying degrees, for easing the suffering of the Iraqi people. Most Arab countries also agreed on the importance of maintaining Iraq's unity and territorial integrity.

The paper says that the development of an Arab stand toward lifting the embargo requires a decisive stand to form an Arab front that seeks to break the embargo. The paper stresses that forming a front will develop and activate joint Arab action so that it would take a practical course toward lifting the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The paper says that Arab and international changes, as well as developments in the Arab and international stand, indicate that the call for lifting the embargo is being heard in many parts of the world at a time when Iraq is reiterating its determination to confront the embargo and its repercussions.

The paper notes that Iraq senses a development on the international level toward lifting the embargo. The paper adds that this was clear in the stands adopted by influential parties in the world, especially some influential countries within the UN Security Council.

AL-THAWRAH concludes its article by saying that those who wagered on the embargo have lost their bet, because the Iraqis will continue to adhere to their stands until victory is achieved.

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Defense Minister Attends Military College Ceremony

JN0301205996 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the patronage of Staff Field Marshal Saddam Husayn, commander in chief of the Armed Forces, the Second Military College today celebrated the graduation of courses No. 80 and 49, the courses of the decisive crossing and the great advance.

The graduation ceremony, which was attended by the leader president's representative, Defense Minister Staff General Fighter Sultan Hashim Ahmad, began with the recitation of Koranic verses and the opening chapter of the Koran for the souls of the righteous martyrs.

The staff major general, commander of the Second Military College, then delivered a speech in which he praised leader President Saddam Husayn's role and his care and unlimited support for the college, taking into consideration that it is a tributary of our valiant Armed Forces.

The graduation ceremony of the two courses was led by the bearers of Iraqi flags, the emblem of the Republic of Iraq, and a big picture of leader President Saddam Husayn, followed by the regular parade.

Defense Minister Staff Gen. Sultan Hashim Ahmad; the staff lieutenant general chief of staff; and the staff brigadier general, representative of the Military Bureau, then distributed awards to outstanding graduates.

The commander of the Second Military College sent a cable to leader President Saddam Husayn in which he pledged to his excellency to remain faithful soldiers to defend the dear homeland.

Attending the graduation ceremony were Diyala Governor, the assistants to the chief of staff, the lieutenant general secretary of the Defense Ministry, a number of senior Armed Forces officers, and the graduates' families.

KDP Reportedly Accepts Supplies From Government

NC3112164895 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Citing one of its special sources, the newspaper KURDISTAN NWAY reported today that the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP], in the context of its cooperation and coordination with the 'Aflaqite regime, received 2,000 blankets, 2,000 military overcoats, and 500 tents of various types on the night of 15-16 December. The supplies were handed over to the KDP at the Fa'idah checkpoint by Mosul's deputy security director.

The special source announced that the 'Aflaqite regime allows the citizens of Dahuk to visit Mosul but prevents other citizens from going there. This has caused resentment among the citizens of these areas, particularly the citizens of the (Badinan) area.

First Delivery of Textbooks Sent to Kurdistan Schools

JN0201200796 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Upon the orders of President Saddam Husayn, may God watch over him, the Ministry of Education today sent the first delivery of textbooks to pupils in the governorates of the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan. [passage omitted]

Progress Reported at Southern End of Saddam River

JN3012085895 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 13 Dec 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Dhi Qar — Technical and engineering teams of the State Establishment for the Operation and Maintenance of Saddam River, Southern Site, have carried out 35 percent of the work on the first phase of the 265-kilometer eastern Euphrates canal project.

The engineer superviser has said that the project begins from Kilometer-189 on the Saddam River north of the town of al-Nasiriyah and ends in al-Najaf Governorate. The project, he added, will clear one million donums of reclaimed lands, which are planted with rice, of drainage water. This water will drain into the Saddam River. The engineer supervisor said the project operates with a water pumping capacity of 102 cubic meters per second and that sand work amounted to six million cubic meters in the first area, which is 25 kilometers long, 52 meters wide, and six meters deep. The project serves land in Dhi Qar and al-Muthanna Governorates.

Army Officer Reportedly Killed in Ambush

NC0301154496 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Unified Iraqi National Congress [UINC] said one of its armed groups last Sunday [31 December] ambushed the motorcade of Staff

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Brigadier General Muhammad Hammudi 'Abbud al-Ta'i while passing by the al-Muthanna Forces headquarters near Karkuk, killing him and his driver and capturing his companions.

A UINC statement said that the regime's helicopters staged a barbaric raid on the area after the ambush to avenge the death of Muhammad al-Ta'i.

Letters to UN, League Protest Aircraft 'Violations'

JN2912175895 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1000 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 29 Dec (INA) — Iraq sent a letter of protest to the United Nations on the continued U.S. aircraft violations of Iraqi airspace on reconnaissance and provocation flights.

In a letter he sent yesterday to the UN secretary general, Iraq's permanent UN representative said U.S. aircraft conducted 456 aggressive sorties between 11-20 December, in addition to some reconnaissance flights. The U.S. aircraft broke the sound barrier over many areas.

Iraq sent another letter yesterday to the Arab League on U.S.-British-French aircraft violations of Iraqi airspace, taking off from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The letter noted that this poses a serious threat to Iraq's security, sovereignty, and national unity.

In his letter to Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Iraq's permanent representative to the Arab League said the aircraft continued to violate Iraq's airspace between 11-20 December, mounting 366 aggressive sorties.

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Beilin: Al-Asad-Peres Summit 'Very Important'

TA0301161196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 3 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yosi Beilin, the cabinet minister with special responsibility for the peace process, is this evening meeting Golan settlers who say they are prepared to leave if there is peace with Syria. In an interview with David Eppel he says a summit between Shim'on Peres and Hafiz al-Asad is essential. He was asked if he would encourage the Golan settlers to expand their campaign on behalf of the government's policies.

[Begin recording] [Beilin] I will answer their questions about the peace process with the Syrians and I will refer to the options which are there right now. I don't have any intention to encourage them to continue or to launch a campaign, but I believe that it is important to give them information, as I did with other groups from the Golan Heights in the last weeks.

[Eppel] Just a few hours before Israel and Syria restart the negotiations in Maryland, just how firm is the Israeli position about not withdrawing to the international boundary?

[Beilin] I would say that these negotiations are taking place without preconditions. We are determined to insist upon all the security needs of Israel, upon full peace, which means full normalization. What I can say is that until now we did not get satisfying answers, and I am referring to the last four years of negotiations with the Syrians. If there is a possibility to get now positive answers in the coming weeks or months, then a breakthrough will take place. If not, I am afraid that all of us will have to wait for the next term of the Israeli Government.

[Eppel] Your colleague, Uri Savir, who is, of course, head of the Israeli delegation to these talks, has said that Israel expects real concessions from the Syrians. Can you tell us something about the concessions that Israel really wants?

[Beilin] I think that what is the most important thing for us is to get very accurate answers both about normalization and about the security arrangements. If that is given, I believe everything else will be much easier to negotiate. As long as we don't have satisfying answers about these questions, it will be much more difficult and will take much more time.

[Eppel] One final question, Mr. Beilin. Just how important is a summit meeting between Shim'on Peres and Hafiz al-Asad?

[Beilin] It is very important for the pace of the negotiations. If we don't have such a summit on a political level, I am afraid that it will take more time. [end recording]

Peres: Early Elections If No Progress in Talks

TA0301194696 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Gil Tamari video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] This evening, Labor began its election campaign with a gathering of newly registered members at Kefar Hamaccabiah, which ended a few minutes ago. Prime Minister Shim'on Peres welcomed the new members, and made it clear that the current discussions in Maryland are not on substance, but are aimed at creating an atmosphere to find a partner for more serious talks in the future. He also said that in the meantime the elections would not be brought forward.

[Begin Peres recording] There are those among us colleagues who talk about early elections. The formula acceptable to me is that each day that can be exploited to advance the peace process should not be wasted on an election campaign. Only if it transpires that we must stop will we stop. [end recording]

Party affairs commentator Yaron Deqel will there be early elections?

[Deqel] The truth is that Peres made it clear tonight that early elections depend on the outcome of the negotiations with Syria. The truth is that Peres has still not made up his mind and is waiting to see how things develop in the United States. He must decide by mid-February whether to bring the elections forward to June or hold them in November. [passage omitted]

Is Peres the man behind the list of recommended candidates for the primaries? Peres denies any link to the list, but there is a feeling among Peres people that the festival has begun. Avraham Burg said he will be a minister in the next government, Avraham Katz-'Oz distributes lists to Knesset members, and Peres must decide if he is going back to being a party hack or if he is Israel's prime minister. He took a first step tonight by denying any link to the list of recommended candidates, but he will apparently have to put his house more in order.

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Peres on Early Elections, Syrian Talks

TA0401073396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 4 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by Arye Golan; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Golan] Good morning, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

[Peres] Good morning.

[Golan] There has been a lot of talk over the past few days on the possibility of early elections. We heard that Labor Secretary General Nisim Zvili has advised you to bring the general elections forward. In addition, a poll in today's MA'ARIV shows that half the ministers are in favor of early elections. You said that each day should be utilized to promote peace and that time must not be wasted, but if you are forced to stop the process, you will act for early elections. The question is whether you would not benefit from early elections, which — if they give you a more stable Knesset majority — will enable you to promote peace with Syria much more forcefully after the elections.

[Peres] Look, we need no reason to hold the elections as scheduled; there is a law for that. To bring them forward, we need some very substantial reasons. As long as no such reasons emerge, I see no cause or need to decide on it.

[Golan] Will serious progress with Syria move you to adhere to the election date stipulated by the law: the end of October?

[Peres] As long as peace can be promoted, I will do it.

[Golan] Does the situation at the Wye Plantation look good so far? We heard this morning that Israeli sources close to the negotiations said they are satisfied and that yesterday was the most successful day so far. Can you confirm this?

[Peres] The atmosphere has changed, as has mutual understanding. We have not yet solved the most basic issues, and we have not been acting rashly, contrary to rumors that effect. We have been acting with utmost seriousness, because we understand the serious nature of the issues on the agenda and their importance for each and every Israeli. We will scrutinize every proposal thoroughly.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 4 January also carries a live telephone interview with Peres by 'Oded Ben-'Ami and Mikhal Gazit. Asked by Ben-'Ami whether Christopher's plan to join the Wye Plantation talks is a sign of difficulties between the Israelis and Syrians, Peres says: "I do not think so. I think what the secretary is trying to do is exhaust this encounter more thoroughly, perhaps to give it more impetus. The results so far have been reasonable and acceptable to us, and although we have not yet found any solutions to the basic problems, the new atmosphere may enable us to find appropriate solutions."]

[Golan] Mr. Peres, you said a critical reason is needed for a decision on early elections. There are some good political reasons, however, such as the polls in which Labor looks good and which give you a very big edge over Netanyahu, the very impressive number of people who registered with Labor, and the fact that the public empathy for Labor grew considerably in the wake of the Rabin assassination. Aren't these reasons sufficient?

[Peres] I would not wish political or partisan reasons to decide state issues. I think that I, as prime minister, should see to it that we act on the basis of national reasons rather than a narrow, partisan interest.

[Golan] I see. Meanwhile, a storm is brewing in Labor, with many members continuing to discuss the possibility of and to prepare for early elections. In that context, the famous list of recommended people, which was attributed to you, has been published by Avraham Katz-'Oz. This list, too, fails to mention Hayim Ramon.

[Peres] That list was published without my knowledge or consent. As party chairman, I would never show bias toward any particular candidate. I must be the leader of all the party members and all the candidates and act with total fairness, just as being the prime minister, I am the prime minister of all the citizens.

[Golan] Yet the list does exist, does it not?

[Peres] Perhaps. I have not seen it; I read about it in a newspaper.

[Golan] What do you think of the list?

[Peres] It does not look right to me because it is not my place to intervene in such matters.

[Golan] Yet Katz-'Oz is one of the people close to you. In addition, there have been reports of a meeting held about a month ago by people close to you — such as Minister Yosi Beilin, who is considered your right-hand man — where the plan to assemble a list of recommended candidates was discussed.

[Peres] I do not think this happened in the period since I became prime minister. I repeat: I do not plan to form a list of recommended candidates, and I do not plan to intervene against any candidate. No way. I must be meticulously objective and fair in order to make sure that I do not harm any candidate, God forbid.

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[Golan] Can we assume with any degree of certainty that the future of Ministers Shohat, Sne, Namir, Tzur, and Harish is guaranteed?

[Peres] To the extent that it depends on me. You can see that when I formed the government, I made sure no one was hurt by Yitzhaq's assassination. This applies to ministers as well as civil servants and party officials. You will never hear complaints about an attempt on my part to take any kind of advantage of the new situation. It is my duty to create an atmosphere of trust and fairness and to judge everyone on merit rather than revert to the camps system. I have no intention whatsoever of reverting to any camps system.

[Golan] And you no longer feel any anger toward Minister Hayim Ramon?

[Peres] As you know, I was the one who invited him to join the government and the security cabinet, and I watch his work with interest and wish him every success. He is a member of the cabinet just as I am, and therefore, his success is mine as well.

[Golan] Thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister. Have a nice day.

[Peres] You too.

Zvili Comments on Peres' Focus on Syria

TA0301150596 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 3 Jan 96 p B3

[Interview with Labor Secretary General Nisim Zvili by Orit Galili; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Galili] What is the toughest decision Shim'on Peres will be called upon to make in the near future?

[Zvili] The first strategic decision that will have to be made is whether to include the agreement with Syria in the election campaign. The dialogue process is under way, and assuming that there is a surprise and a declaration of principles is attained within a month and seeing that we promised to hold a referendum on the issue, it will be necessary to decide whether to bring the elections forward and turn the Syrian question into the election campaign issue. In the event that the negotiations run aground, we will also have to consider whether to bring the elections forward in order to renew the negotiations after the elections.

[Galili] Didn't Peres make a mistake when he decided to focus on the Syrian track now?

[Zvili] I think he did. It would have been better to attain the people's approval first, and go for an arrangement with Syria after the elections. It would have been better if the issue were dealt with by a government that had received the people's confidence and had four years ahead of it. However, Peres made a decision and there is no point in dwelling on the past. Peres weighed all the factors and heard out all the opinions before he decided to resume the process with Syria. He was also aware of the fact that an argument about the Golan Heights would provide a new ideological basis for Binyamin Netanyahu, helped by forces within Labor. Had an agreement with Syria not been in the offing, Netanyahu would not have had a leg to stand on in the elections since he has already lost the battle for Judaea and Samaria. Netanyahu is the last blind politician.

[Galili] What advantage does Netanyahu have at the moment with regard to the process with Syria?

[Zvili] I am afraid about committing ourselves to a price while the Syrian side remains indifferent, which is the worst scenario that we could run in the elections. Owing to the peace with Syria, the most important peace from the strategic point of view, we might have to pay a political price that might affect all other peace processes in the Middle East. That is why I am against making any political declaration as long as the Syrian payoff remains unclear. For his part, Peres will not make any committing declaration before all components of the agreement are clear.

[Galili] What other difficulties will Peres face in the election campaign?

[Zvili] The Likud will try to portray him as someone who is selling the country down the river. They will use Peres' recent remarks on the nuclear issue, which were ill-advised. They will dwell on intimidation and more intimidation. Instead of katyushas on Ashqelon they will threaten us with Syrian cannon on Qiryat Shemona. They can no longer play on Peres' lack of credibility, so they will harp on the generation gap and on Peres' age as opposed to Netanyahu's. They will harp very strongly on this note. Our response will be that Bibi could only wish to have the young ideas that Shim'on has at his fingertips. [passage omitted]

Settlers Laud King Husayn's Warning on Syria

TA0401114996 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 4 Jan 96 p 3

[Report by Yehuda Goren]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yesterday, the Golan Settlements Committee expressed satisfaction with reports that Jordan's King Husayn had warned Israel against courting Syria too passionately and agreeing to uncalculated concessions. The committee called on the government "to take the king's warnings seriously and stop

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the shameful pursuit of al-Asad." The committee added that "it is good that one leader in the region cares about Israel's interests." [passage omitted]

Abu-Middayn Remarks Spark Calls For Dismissal

TA0401092596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli officials have reacted sharply to the accusation made by Furayh Abu-Middayn, the Palestinian Authority official in charge of justice, that Israel, which did not refuse the German reparation payments, is refusing to compensate Palestinian victims of the intifadah.

Minister Moshe Shahal said that the analogy is grisly and shocking and that he will discuss it with the prime minister, because it calls for an emphatic reaction.

Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu called on the government to condemn the appalling defamation.

The leaders of the National Religious Party and Tzomet called on the prime minister to demand that 'Arafat fire Abu-Middayn.

Talks With Abu-Middayn Canceled

TA0401114096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 4 Jan 96

[Report by Nisim Qeynan]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The first meeting of the Israeli-Palestinian legal committee, headed by Justice Minister David Liba'i and the Palestinian Authority official in charge of justice, which was supposed to be held at Erez this morning was canceled in the wake of Furayh Abu-Middayn's remarks that likened the casualties of the intifadah to the victims of the Nazi regime. By the way, Abu-Middayn arrived at the District Coordination and Liaison Office, but he was tactfully told that in view of his remarks, this was not the right time to meet with him. He left without having met with anyone.

Professor David Liba'i, the justice minister, did meet at Erez with a Palestinian delegation headed by Dr. Nabil Sha'th, to whom he conveyed Israel's horror at Abu-Middayn's remarks. Minister Liba'i said the comparison between the Nazi occupation, which annihilated millions in accordance with an official plan, and Israel's rule in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza was ignorant and vicious. [passage omitted]

Later we heard Nabil Sha'th's comment on his colleague Abu-Middayn's brash remarks:

[Begin Sha'th recording, in English] The fact that he mentioned Germany in this case is, I know, very sensitive to Israelis. In no way we are accusing Israelis of being Nazis, and I don't think this is really fair. I don't think the comparison meant the horrible aspects of the Holocaust, which we all hate and which we all condemn and consider one of the worst incidents in recent history. So, I think it should be clear that in no way do we condone the Holocaust, no way do we accept this strict comparison, but I think Furayh Abu-Middayn never meant it this way. I think he, as a legal person, only meant the legal implications. [end recording]

As for the meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian delegations, it was agreed that 1,200 prisoners will be released on 10 and 11 January. Minister Liba'i made it clear that prisoners who had killed or wounded Israelis will not be released. The five female prisoners convicted of murder will not be released either.

Peres Comments on Palestinians Revoking Covenant

TA0401125196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says Israel will stop the peace process with the Palestinians if they fail to honor their commitment to annul the Palestinian Covenant two months after the elections in the territories. Peres made these remarks in reply to Tel Aviv high school students' questions. Our correspondent Yo'av Aviv reports from the Mann Auditorium:

[Begin recording] [Aviv] Yes, the Labor Party has changed its stand on the Golan, although it contravenes its platform. A party can change its mind and views, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres today told an assembly of 12th-grade students from Tel Aviv who will soon join the army.

[Peres] May we change our stand after announcing our platform? My answer is yes. The agreement [with Syria] will include economic aspects. I ask myself: What will give us more security — 20 military outposts or 20 tourist hotels along the border? My answer is that hotels will do it no less than outposts. It means both peace and security.

[Aviv] The prime minister did not answer the question about the future of the Golan settlements, although he said that the future peace will not be based merely on agreements and understandings. It will be unquestionably based on the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] strength, which we will continue to cultivate. Rabin was convinced that this is the right way, Peres said. [passage omitted]

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Israel did not sign an agreement about speeches, Peres told the students, referring to 'Arafat's declarations concerning the return to Jerusalem and the Palestinian Covenant, which so far has not been annulled. The prime minister added, however, that at some stage we may be forced to stop the negotiations with the Palestinians.

[Peres] The entire PLO leadership with which we have been negotiating made a written commitment, which was sent to Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, saying: We, the people with whom you have been negotiating, do not recognize the inoperative [preceding word in English] — that is the term they used.... [pauses]; we do not view the Palestinian Covenant as something that can or should be carried out. The Palestinians promised to convene the Palestine National Council, their legislative body, two months after the elections — scheduled for 20 January 1996, two or three weeks from now — and to revoke the Palestinian Covenant clauses that call for the annihilation of Israel. If they do not do it, we will stop the peace process.

[Aviv] Referring to freedom of speech, the prime minister said it reached its limit when the gunshots rang out. A gang of hooligans who do not know the Ten Commandments — that was his description of the assassin and his associates. [end recording]

Beilin: Accord With Palestinians Before Elections

TA0301160096 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 3 Jan 96 p 3

[Report by Arye Dayan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Yosi Beilin believes that Israel ought to reach an understanding with the Palestinians about the principles of the permanent arrangement prior to the elections to the premiership and the Knesset scheduled for the end of October. Beilin was addressing a meeting of Israeli ambassadors accredited to West European countries at the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem.

The negotiations on the permanent arrangement will begin in May, and Beilin estimates that five months are enough to formulate the basic understandings about the nature of the arrangement. "In that event, the elections would be a kind of referendum on the issue," the minister said.

In his opinion, an understanding could be reached with the Palestinians about principles that would not harm any vital Israeli interests. He would not elaborate on this point, but noted that "from the geographic point of view, an understanding could be reached about boundaries in whose context most of the settlers would be annexed to Israel." Beilin was referring to the annexation of Ma'ale Adumim, Alfey Menashe, and Ari'el, where most of settlers live.

The minister went on to say that he believes an understanding could also be reached on the question of the refugees, Jerusalem, and security arrangements. In his opinion, such an understanding could be attained even in the absence of Israeli willingness to return to the 1967 borders or forgo the status of a united Jerusalem as Israel's capital. According to him, neither would such an understanding require the establishment of a Palestinian army or agreement to allow refugees to return to the sovereign boundaries of the State of Israel.

"It must be clear to the Palestinians that in any case no progress will be made in the negotiations if the Palestinian Covenant is not amended within two months of the elections to the Palestinian Council, as stipulated in the agreement with the PLO," Beilin said.

Likud Attempting To Delay Palestinian Elections

TA0301155996 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 3 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Liat Collins]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Likud carried out a parliamentary maneuver yesterday aimed at delaying the Palestinian Authority elections scheduled for January 20. The Likud announced that it considered the vote on the first reading of the Law on the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip a no-confidence motion, which means the vote cannot take place until Monday [8 January].

One of the clauses in the bill is a necessary legislative amendment to allow voting to take place in eastern Jerusalem post offices. If the law does not pass all three readings in time, the voting cannot take place as agreed upon in the Oslo Agreements.

Likud faction chairman Moshe Qatzav said the Likud would take all possible parliamentary steps to drag out the passing of the law, which in his opinion creates a Palestinian state.

After the no-confidence motion vote next week, the law will be referred to a Knesset committee. The Likud MKs [Knesset member] intend to carry out a filibuster within the committee to further postpone the votes on second and third reading.

According to Qatzav, the faction will ask that the second and third readings also be changed into no-confidence motions. He said the measures are a means of protesting "the hasty and chaotic legislation, which

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is being presented by the government to correct the mistakes it made in Oslo 1."

Justice Minister David Liba'i presented the bill yesterday. The clauses include allowing the release or transfer of prisoners to the Palestinian Authority. It also defines conditions for IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in an emergency.

The Likud also condemned the bill's title, saying it should have referred to Judaea and Samaria instead of the West Bank.

Liba'i explained that this is the name of the signed agreement with the Palestinians. His response caused a round of opposition heckling in the plenum.

"The bill will grant a pardon to murderers, and will grant Palestinians in Judaea and Samaria a status of being above the law and let them act with abandon on issues concerning the security of Israeli citizens," Qatzav said.

He also attacked the proposal by Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer to offer the Palestinians $250 million to ensure they prevent terror attacks before the Israeli general elections.

Sources Deny U.S. Query on Military Sale to PRC

TA0401112696 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 4 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by On Levi]

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States is demanding clarifications from Israel about rumors that Israel plans to transfer military technologies to the PRC, including technology related to the Lavi aircraft.

Yesterday, at a briefing to correspondents in the United States, a State Department spokesman said that a query on the matter had been sent to Israel.

Senior Israeli sources said yesterday that reports occasionally appear in the media about Israel's intention to sell weapons, including those incorporating U.S. technology, to China. In response to a question, sources said that the State Department has not approached Israel on this matter.

Peres' Bureau Says Espionage Report 'Baseless'

TA0301185596 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Reacting to the report published today in AL-HAYAH about an Israeli espionage ring operating in Egypt, the Prime Minister's Bureau said it was baseless.

The London-based AL-HAYAH revealed today that the Egyptian security authorities apprehended the ring members, including their leader, an al-'Arish resident. [passage omitted]

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Layth Shubaylat Lecture Criticizes King Husayn

NC0401064096 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic
30 Dec 95 p 15

[Lecture by Layth Shubaylat, chairman of the Jordanian Engineers Association, in al-Tafilah on 8 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Nobody in Jordan mourns Abu-Ibrahim (Fathi al-Shiqaqi). The people are afraid to visit the proud house of the leader of Islamic Jihad, who avenged his nation with the Beit Lid operation and other similar operations. With a sense of fear and under the circumstances of coercion and intimidation in which they worship the idol the people realize that glorifying the mujahidin in Jordan, which is being subjected to the biggest zionisation process, angers the new masters of the region. Our rulers have publicly declared their subservience to, their admiration for, their love of, and their brotherhood with these new masters, who earned the right to open official councils of condolences in Jordan for someone whom our rulers, in defiance of our masses, have falsely called the "martyr" of peace. As for martyr Fathi al-Shiqaqi, who was killed on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, our media gave him less coverage than it would normally gave to a whale stranded on a beach in a remote place in the world. As for the criminal who orphaned hundreds of children from Jordan and Palestine, widowed their mothers, and broke the bones of the children of the stone—as we saw on television—who was the first to give a shoot-to-kill orders, who conquered Jerusalem and wrested it from Jordanian commanders and leaders—our government, which has disclosed its Zionist face, covered the event as a national and pan-Arab tragedy that had befallen one of Jordan's leaders. None of these deceased Jordanians ever received more than three minutes of television coverage.

Let us dig a bit into the past. Didn't Wasfi al-Tall receive superficial coverage after all reports and the people's feelings had indicated that the regime deliberately did not guard him properly and did not seriously demand the extradition of his killers? Do your remember that Hazza', or Sulayman, or Shafiq, or Farhan, or Faras — the martyr of the 1967 defeat — received more than one minute of television coverage and some columns in our daily newspapers. They were not Zionist Arabs. They were not from the Rababinah [play on word Rabin] clan—according to theater director Muhammad al-Shawaqifah and actor Musa Hajjazin—whose leader died and to which many world leaders belong, including Arab leaders, whether by naturalization, "intrusion," or allegiance.

The last crime of Rabin, forgiven by Jordan and damned by God, was that he ordered the assassination of martyr Fathi al-Shiqaqi. This took place while the shaykh of the Rababinah was going to Amman to attend the economic conference. The hosts and their media kept silent "in dignity" about the subject so as not disturb Rabin, Peres, and their entourage from "our masters." Peres then said that the number of murderers was now one less with the martyrdom of al- Shiqaqi.

Nobody came to the home of al-Shiqaqi in al-Rusayfah except perhaps one or two persons each hour, as opposed to his wake in Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon. This is because our people, whose dreams have been abandoned by their popular leaders, realize that offering condolences for al-Shiqaqi angers the regime, which has publicly adopted Zionism. Our people realize that those who seek the state's blessing must visit the enemy's embassy to register their name in the book of condolences.

The Jordanian people have been puzzled and slapped in the face several times this year when they discovered the extent of amity, relationship, and strong feelings between our rulers and the builders of the Third Temple. The conciliation that took place was not between hostile leaders but between friendly and brotherly leaders who remained patient for the necessary period of time until the elixir of normalization which they administered to their people had worked and made them accept the declaration of friendship and brotherhood between the leaders of world Zionism, who include Jews, Americans, Europeans, and Arabs.

The widow of the martyr of the nation and Islam did not receive official condolences or a tear from a princess or an official's wife, whereas the queen [Nur] choked with tears while attending the funeral of the ruler of the land and leader of the Rababinah clan, which belongs to the Zionist tribe. Rabin expelled the wife of martyr al-Shiqaqi from holy Jerusalem a month ago. She did not find a kind hand to touch her children's heads but an official frown befitting the frowner. At the same time, the Jordanians were shocked by the embracing of "sister Leah" and by the description of her husband Rabin as a dear brother and friend. It is the age of the shedding of the fig leaf and of exposing material and moral defects.

How could this have happened? Could these relations be a sudden wind that blew on the rulers of the Middle East, who despise the Arabs and Arabism, or are they as old as these rulers' membership in secret lodges which carry the names of some leaders who have pledged to rebuild the Third Temple of Solomon in the place of the al-Aqsa Mosque. This is the theme of our lecture today.

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The Balfour Declaration anniversary this year passed quietly after being an annual occasion for mobilizing the masses against those who betrayed the nation and sold the territories. Governments used to vie with the peoples in marking the occasion and cursing colonialism. They distorted history to the extent of deceiving the people into believing that the betrayal came only from the allies who broke the promises they had made, thus covering up the connivance of the Arab leaderships. The leaderships played the double game of maintaining the closest ties and links with the English and their allies despite the latter's scheming against the nation while simultaneously leading the peoples along the so-called road of "independence" and "freedom."

The Arab peoples were conditioned to distort the concept of independence. Thus the noble meanings of freedom from foreigners were turned into the single meaning of one brother's freedom from his brother and from their overall nation. Thus when "independence" was inverted, its distorted meaning was entrenched in the peoples' minds, the vile regional conflicts appeared, and inter-Arab fighting reached its climax, the Arab regimes handed over their so-called independence to the Zionist enemy in treaties that would not have passed peacefully had it not been for the long term process of conditioning the peoples which the leaderships had practiced.

Among the most important aspects of this conditioning were the forged history books which are still included in the curricula and the superficial historic studies that covered up the Arab leaderships' betrayal and their constant collusion with the English and other allies. The conditioning started when the Arab citizens accepted the contradiction between their rulers' relationship with the English and the French (and then the Americans) with what the case should have been had the leaderships been sincere in their claims that the allies had stabbed them in the back and broken their promise. How could the unique and friendly relationships between our leaderships and them continue if the leaderships are sincere in their claim that the allies stabbed them in the back, unless these same leaderships were the dagger with which the allies stabbed the nation in the back and are continuing to do so?

The conditioning and subjugation reach their apogee when the leaderships and their official media sing the praise before the people, which is subjected to conditioning and acts of distortion, of their unique friendship with the United States, England, the allies, and the Zionists, who are butchering Iraq and the Iraqis in front of us and ordering their slaves to boycott their Arab brothers to the vile extent of throwing away at the borders the loaves of bread that travelers to Iraq carry with them. They reach their apogee when the leaderships sing the praise of the ties of friendship, respect, cordiality, and the illusion of kinship through Abraham with the Zionists and their leaders. This is an illusion that God disclaimed when he says (Abraham was not a Jew nor yet a Christian; but he was true in Faith, and bowed his will to God's, (which is Islam), and he joined not gods with God). And they reach their apogee when an economic conference is held to falsely "revive" the countries and the region through a (Jordanian-Israeli-Palestinian) partnership in a "praiseworthy" Arab-Zionist-American-European alliance while Iraq and the Iraqis are dying from starvation like flies because of their nationalism and their belief in an Arabism which others claim to be leading its revolution.

If the rush to welcome the Jews — who were cursed by God in his book and through the tongue of David and Jesus Christ — at a time when they are bearing their teeth toward Iraq and the Iraqis is not betrayal of God, his messenger, the nation, charters, and laws, what is it then? Has the treason occurred suddenly? Or was it old and deep rooted and revealed bit by bit until today when it can openly boast of itself and of the secret meetings, charters, and pledges it had concluded, thus breaking the public pledges and charters that were the bases for their peoples' loyalty?

If this is not the age of al-Ruwaybidah [not further identified] where the liar is believed and the honest is called a liar, where the traitor is trusted and the loyal is called a traitor, and where the frivolous person speaks about public affairs and is given time and space to fill the television screens with his trivial talk while those who hold the opposite view are not allowed to debate with his ideas and policy; if this is not the age of al-Ruwaybidah which God has humiliated us with and fated us to hear this person's views which turn treason into patriotism and patriotism into treason, which turn Zionism into a liberation movement and the Arab liberation movement and the Palestinian-Lebanese jihad into terrorism, which turn the American and the Zionist into very close, dear, and loyal friends and besieged Iraq into a "criminal and an enemy" of human rights, which turn the autocracy of the Jordanian authority into a pluralistic and democratic example to be followed, and which turn martyr Fathi al-Shiqaqi into a terrorist killer and the terrorist usurper Rabin into the "martyr of peace." If this is not the age of al-Ruwaybidah, the brothers and descendants of al-Ruwaybidah, and those of his ilk who rally behind al-Ruwaybidah, then what age is it?

Modern history based on scientific references and not on books that advocate normalization or on books by authors subservient to rulers reveals that consistent

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deviations have been committed by Arab leaders whom the people have trusted to protect their creed, land, and honor.

It has been absolutely proven that al-Sharif al-Husayn kept his correspondence with McMahon secret. These letters preceded the Balfour Declaration, the Sykes-Picot Treaty, the San Remo treaty, and the Versailles Treaty. Even Faysal complained that he did not see these letters although he persistently asked to see them while he was negotiating with the Allies. These letters were published for the first time after a quarter of a century. The British government published these letters in a White Paper in March 1939 for a roundtable conference on the future of Palestine.

According to the investigation of Dr. Anis Sayigh, it has been proven from these letters that the leader of the revolution deliberately and premeditatedly gave up many things, including Arab lands. He gave up Aden in the first letter although it was agreed that its future would be discussed after the war. He gave up the whole of Mersin province in his third letter after he used to call for the liberation of all Syrian territory and although the British government wanted to exclude only the city. In his fourth letter, he gave up Mount Lebanon temporarily and left Iraq's future to Britains' "justice and wisdom." In his book the "Hashemites and the Great Arab Revolution," Anis Sayigh says: "Al-Husayn's relationship with the British government included other errors, besides simplicity and naivete. There was something bordering on bad intentions and a deliberate neglect of pan-Arab goals for the sake of private gains." He adds: "The sons of al-Husayn continued to cooperate with the British government for their own private interests, even after they realized that Britain had deceived the Arabs and al-Husayn in particular. They tried to refute the people's suspicion of Britain, its intentions, its actions, and its promises. They continued to defend Britain. They continued to conceal the facts from the people who were entitled to know everything."

Al-Husayn did not consult with his legal, linguistic, and history advisers. He kept his correspondence with McMahon secret. This made him easy prey for Britain's trickery. Worse than that, when he discovered Britain's deception, he did not act properly. He accepted verbal assurances on the Sykes-Picot treaty and the Balfour Declaration and declared that he had confidence in his allies.

Following his return from the Versailles Conference, even Faysal concealed all the trickery of Britain and France and their plotting against the Arab nation. He addressed the irate Syrian masses who learned of his concessions in Paris. He told them: "No nation wants to enslave us. My several official trips to Europe and the conversations and correspondences which took place between me and its leaders left me no doubt or hesitation about the intentions of its free governments." He then spoke at length about his adherence to pan-Arab principles and the impossibility of reneging on them, although "he left Paris completely satisfied with the agreement with Clemenceau," in which he accepted France's mandate of Syria and that Lebanon be independent from Syria and under French custodianship. He had proposed to Clemenceau that the French army officers command the Arab Army in return for France declaring him a king of a semi- independent Syria. But Clemenceau wanted more and got it in an agreement which was initialed by the two sides.

He covered his failure after his arrival in Beirut on 30 April 1919. Instead of exposing the state which tried to swallow the independence of the country, violate the people's freedoms, wipe out their hopes, and shatter their unity and instead of mobilizing the people behind him against these international ambitions and evils, he declared on his arrival in Beirut that he had completely succeeded in his trip thanks to the "good intentions of the four great powers, their honesty, and their adherence to the noble principles which they have enshrined into a constitution for their work and naturally for the hopes of the nation." Denying that there were European ambitions, he said: "I cannot differentiate between one state and another regarding their good intentions."

But the Syrian masses led by the national forces, such as the National Committee formed by Kamil al-Qassab, the al-'Ahd Party, the Arab al-Fatah Party, and the Front for the Defense of Syria's Arabism, resisted Faysal and his conduct. Faysal tried to paralyze the national movement and weaken its control of the country. He started with the Syrian Congress led by Muhammad Rashid Rida. This was because "the congress denounced Faysal's actions in Paris and decided to put him under strict supervision on his return. If it was proven that Faysal continued to concede basic principles, the congress would dismiss him as amir of the country." Therefore, Faysal prepared a plan to restrict the powers of the congress as a prelude to disbanding it. Rida rejected the plan and answered him in a memorandum in which he affirmed that the powers of the congress, which emanated from the people, were higher than the powers of the amir. Hot debate ensued between the two sides in which the nationalists supported the congress and brought down Faysal's plan.

When things got complicated and the national movement decided to stand up to the French schemes, Faysal gave up. He responded to the five demands of the gen-

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eral magistrate in Lebanon, Gouraud, in a memorandum dated 15 July 1920. The demands included the disbandment of the Arab Army in the Syrian kingdom, the consent to the French mandate on Syria, the withdrawal of the Faysali currency and its substitution with a French banknote, the punishment of France's "enemies" in Syria by bringing them to trial, and allowing the Syrian troops to occupy Aleppo and use the Syrian railways in transporting the French troops toward the Turkish borders. The demands had been rejected by the National Assembly in an historic meeting, at which they were viewed as an assault on the country's dignity and independence. The Assembly decided to confront the problem boldly and to take the necessary preparations to defend the country militarily. The task was entrusted to War Minister Yusuf al-'Azmah. Faysal cabled his response to Gouraud on 16 September and discharged the army. When the cabinet protested, he dissolved it. Failing to appoint a replacement, he summoned Yusuf al-'Azmah and ordered him to stop the defensive preparations he was supervising to defend the country. But the latter refused the king's orders and made him understand that he was heeding the decisions of the Constituent Assembly, which was entrusted with the task of preventing the French from entering the kingdom. Faysal called a meeting of the Assembly to persuade them. But the assembly members turned him down and insisted on confronting France firmly and in dignity. Discharging the army was a fatal blow to the Syrian being. The national parties failed to persuade Faysal to rebuild the army, call off the discharge orders, and declare public mobilization against France. The latter insisted on his refusal.

Going back to al-Husayn-McMahon letters, McMahon said in his letter to the TIMES on 23 July 1937: "When I made a pledge to King al-Husayn, I never meant to annex Palestine to the region whose Arabs were promised independence...I have every reason to believe that the king understood at the time that Palestine was not part of my pledge."

Although news of the British-French secret agreements to partition and colonialize the Arab states later reached al-Husayn and Faysal, even before they were exposed by the socialist revolution in Russia, dealings with them never rose to the level of responsibility. Even when Jamal Pacha wrote about these agreements to Faysal and Jamal al-'Askari, who were camping near al-'Aqabah, offering them a conciliation, Faysal cabled the news to his father. But the latter was not enraged, neither against his allies nor for the dignity of the issue. He only asked the British about it. It took them months before they answered that the matter was merely an exchange of views. Al-Husayn was content with that answer, although he and his sons had personally learned of the matter from Sykes and Picot during their visits, at least six months before the Russians publicized the document. Picot lectured a group of Syrians in Cairo in the presence of his colleague Sykes when they were on their way to Jeddah in April 1917. He announced that the allies have chosen France as a custodian of Syria and recognized its privileges in the orient. Muhammad Sharif al-Faruqi conveyed the speech to the letter in a message to al-Husayn. The letter, dated 27 April 1917, is kept at Yale University. Sections of it were published by the Zionist Iraqi author Elie Khadduri in his book "England and the Middle East" according to Dr. Anis....He added: "Al-Husayn never got angry. He even prohibited his ambassador to Egypt from discussing the matter or protesting it, warning him against discussing Syria's fate in general or denouncing the French interests, since France was an ally of Britain, the major ally. His excuse was that Arabs would attain their ends in due time; why the rush then?"

Al-Husayn sent his son Faysal a message, rejecting Jamal Pacha's offer, which exposed the British and French betrayal. He warned him against contacting the Turks, telling him that his Arab honor prevented him from forsaking his allies in the middle of the battle."

Popular Committee To Defend Shubaylat Formed

JN0401093796 Amman THE STAR in English 4-10 Jan 96 p 2

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A new popular Committee for the Defence of Layth Shubaylat was formed last week. The 34-member committee includes doctors, lawyers, engineers, human rights activists, and politicians.

Lower House Deputy Tujan Faysal is on the list as are other well known names like Bahjat Abu Gharbiyah and the Islamist columnist Ziyad Abu Ghanimah. It is not yet certain how the committee will pursue its course of action, but it could well prove a formidable force once the Shubaylat case starts in the State Security Court.

Meanwhile, the popular committee organized a visit to Shubaylat at al-Juwaydah's Correctional Facility.

Eye witnesses confirmed that there were a number of buses carrying visitors from as far as al-Tafilah, Shubaylat's hometown. According to AL-HADATH, some were turned away.

Among the visitors were deputies Khalil Haddadin and Hammam al-Sa'id, Taysir al-Zibri, the former general secretary of Hashd, Ziyad Abu Ghanimah and the Vice-President of the Engineers Association Mr. 'Azam al-Hunaydi.

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Al-Murr on Decision To Enter Palestinian Camps

NC0401100996 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Prime Minister Michel al-Murr has emphasized that the Council of Ministers' decision to enter the [Palestinian] camps aims to arrest any criminals or violators of the law who regard the camps as out of bounds for security forces.

In an exclusive interview with the Voice of Lebanon from Tunis, Minister al-Murr said there is no area out of bounds for the security forces anymore and that this is the main aim behind the Council of Minsiters' decision.

Commenting on the timing of entry into the camps, he said this is up to the security authorities which decide the appropriate time to implement the measure because there is no area out of bounds for the security forces any longer.

He stressed that all Lebanese territories, including any camp or any other area, will come under the control of the Lebanese security and military forces.

Cabinet Entrusts Military With Security Duties

NC0401073396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We begin with resolutions passed by the Council of Ministers which convened at the Government House under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

The Council of Ministers decided to instruct the military to implement all security tasks in order to maintain security, in addition to arresting all wanted people.

The Council of Ministers made this decision after a man called Abu-Mahjan residing in the 'Ayn al-Hulwah [Palestinian] Camp refused to appear before the public investigator for questioning about the assassination of Shaykh Nizar al-Halabi.

Last night, the Palestinian forces coalition command issued a statement calling for a consensus in the 'Ayn al-Hulwah Camp today to ask Ahmad 'Abd-al-Karim al-Sa'di, alias Abu-Mahjan, to give himself up to the Lebanese authorities or otherwise his political and popular cover will be lifted and he will be responsible for any consequences.

Judicial Investigating judge 'Abdallah al-Bitar will resume investigations into the assassination of al-Halabi today. He will question two detainees, Wasim 'Id al-Mu'ti and Muhammad 'Ali al-Saghir. Yesterday, he questioned a man called Rabi' Nab'ah and issued an arrest warrant against him. Judge al-Bitar also issued a warrant summoning Abu-Mahjan, who yesterday failed to show up for questioning as planned.

REUTER reports that the Lebanese army stepped up security measures around the 'Ayn al-Hulwah Camp and searched people entering and leaving the camp.

The Council of Ministers also adopted a decision to dissolve two societies in Tripoli and 'Akkar. The session lasted from 1745-1945 yesterday.

UNIFIL Commander Protests Attacks

NC0401091896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Extreme caution prevails in areas adjacent to the occupied border strip amid continuing attacks. The attacks covered areas in the central and western sectors and stretched to Iqlim al-Tuffah and the eastern sector.

A source in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] says that a meeting was held in Tel Aviv recently between UNIFIL Commander Stanislaw and Israeli Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq in the latter's office. At the meeting, the UNIFIL commander protested last month's nail-bomb attack on a Norwegian patrol that wounded three Norwegians in the town of Blat. He also protested against the shelling of Qabrikha with nail bombs. Yesterday, he inspected Qabrikha Town to check the situation there and open an investigation into last weeks' nail-bomb attack, which killed a citizen and wounded four others. The UNIFIL commander said he was against the use of any type of shells in bombarding civilians who should be kept uninvolved. He expressed optimism that 1996 will be a year of peace for everyone.

[In a report on the south, Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic at 0630 GMT on 4 January adds: "Cautious calm prevailed in various areas in the south last night following occupation artillery attacks in the evening. At around 1800 yesterday, the occupation forces artillery bombarded Wadi Sribbin with more than 25 120-mm rounds. Some 10 155-mm shells landed in the al-Shabraq area between Haddathah and Rshaf originating from the Muhaybib post. Three similar shells originating from the Yarin post fell on the suburbs of Kafra. At about 1830, the Yarin post fired five shells in the direction of Tallat al-Huqban on the outskirts of Yatar.

["At 2030, the 'Ayta al-Jabal woods came under 12.7-mm machine-gun fire from the Bayt Yahun position."]

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Former Prime Minister Michel 'Awn Interviewed

PY3012010295 Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese 27 Dec 95 p 31

[Interview with former Prime Minister Michel 'Awn by correspondent Helena Celestino; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Celestino] Has your exile in France ended?

['Awn] I hope so. The Lebanese Government's interpretation is that it ends in August 1996. This represents an arbitrary decision. Pursuant to an agreement between Lebanon and France, my exile would last five years. However, France does not want to interfere and prefers to leave this decision to Lebanon.

[Celestino] Are you already preparing your comeback to Lebanon?

['Awn] Indeed. I hope that the situation will improve by that time, allowing me to settle down with some security. At this moment, things are not faring well. National sovereignty has been abolished by Syria. Political freedom has been significantly limited. A minority holds power and this minority has been boycotted by the people. To challenge the established order would be tantamount to run the risk of suffering an attack. As long as Syria occupies Lebanon, our country will not have any stability, despite all the international hypocrisy.

[Celestino] What role do you believe you can play after your comeback?

['Awn] A leading role. I can have a congressional majority, if the parliamentary system remains. I am the resistance symbol and I can win the elections. I was not expelled by the people or the Lebanese Army. I was expelled by the Syrian Army.

[Celestino] Are you planning to run in the 1996 elections?

['Awn] If the elections are free, yes. If the elections are held under Syrian control, they will surely be a hoax. In the 1992 elections, an electoral law was drawn up to favor pro-Syrians, the electoral lists were fabricated, and the vote count was a fraud. There is a very clear choice for the Lebanese: They are against Syrian occupation and support resistance. I am not afraid of free elections, but of fabricated elections. As Syria still enjoys some international support, I am afraid of this fabrication being legally approved. I will impose conditions to participate in these elections.

[Celestino] Will the elections be held after your exile ends?

['Awn] The two things will take place more or less at the same time. It is simple: If I am not permitted to go back to my country, it will be a sign that the elections will not be free. First, it is necessary for them to accept my comeback and that I participate in the government that will control the elections. I will immediately require the presence of international observers and a new electoral law.

[Celestino] Have you already begun negotiating your comeback?

['Awn] I will not negotiate. My comeback represents a right. I will merely negotiate the security conditions. As a former prime minister and former Armed Forces chief, I have a right to a security guard.

[Celestino] How do you assess the political situation in Lebanon?

['Awn] I am totally against the current regime, a regime that was established by an occupation force that has mortgaged our national sovereignty. Our country is becoming increasingly poorer. Syria is a terrorist state and tasking it with making peace in Lebanon represents an affront.

[Celestino] Don't you believe in achieving peace in Lebanon?

['Awn] Peace in Lebanon represents wishful thinking. There are still armed groups, as the Hizbollah, that are attacking Israel and are provoking armed responses. Half of Lebanon is in flames. Peace was made because the resistance against Syria was defeated, but the struggle against Israel persists. There is no peace or calm in Lebanon. Israeli people are being killed every day in Lebanon. It is a war. Regardless of the signing of a peace agreement between Syria and Israel, things will change in Lebanon. If the agreement is not signed, the international community will accuse Syria of being a terrorist country that damaged Turkey, Lebanon, and Israel. If the peace agreement is signed, the security problems between Syria and Israel will end and, therefore, Syria will have to withdraw from Lebanon. In both cases, the situation will have to change.

Islamic Resistance Leader Interviewed

MM0301161496 London FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH in Arabic January 96 pp 21-22

[Interview with unidentified Islamic Resistance leader by Qasim Qusayr in Beirut; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Qusayr] How do you evaluate the operations of the [Lebanese] Islamic resistance in the past period?

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[Interviewee] The operations carried out by the Islamic resistance recently are considered among the most successful operations which directly serve the objectives of resistance work in Lebanon. They have also proved that the strugglers possess a very big capability for striking at the Israeli military forces, and consequently exhausting this enemy who has usurped our land. The most important thing about these operations, however, is that they prove the resistance's constant ability to seize the initiative and to dominate the battlefield with regard to the choice of targets, the timing of action, and the scope and diversity of the strikes.

Furthermore, the Islamic resistance has succeeded in exposing the Zionist enemy which has often bragged about its capabilities and tactics. The enemy's lack of cohesion and harmony with regard to the facts has become evident to all, and it is now possible for us to envisage that it is possible today to enter into a new battle against the enemy and to rout it and weaken it. Do we not see the state of mutual recrimination that has been taking place among the enemy leaders and their revelation of the devastating failure that has befallen them — a phenomenon which we have never before witnessed during our past experiences with this enemy, who kept deriding and taking lightly the capabilities of the Arabs and Muslims, branding them as incapable of fighting and bestowing on them similar descriptions which can be attributed more accurately to the enemy in the light of the situation in Lebanon and the confrontations taking place there....

This is a great success achieved by the Islamic resistance which has proven to all the sons of our nation that we become very strong once we muster the means of force and that our enemy becomes very weak when we scrutinize his true situation and deal with it seriously. The resistance in Lebanon provides a model for every Arab and Muslim who relies on his Almighty God, adheres to his rights, and performs his duty...

[Qusayr] What were the repercussions of these operations on the Zionist entity?

[Interviewee] The glorious operations carried out by the Islamic resistance have heavily dominated the political situation inside the Israeli entity and put pressure on his thinking and methods, thus forcing him to alter his political program and admit that he no longer possesses all the cards of the game in the region, in which he considers himself the principal force. Furthermore, the gap in the Zionist wall has widened on the Lebanese side and matters have reached a very sensitive state which required the enemy to declare a political mobilization. All these factors have not been things that can be taken lightly, as is evident from the fact that prior to his death the enemy prime minister found it necessary to visit Southern Lebanon three times and to hold successive extraordinary meetings which failed to produce any clear decisions about the measures he could take in the face of the defeats he had suffered, or at least to deliver a convincing speech to the Zionists inside [Israel]. All these facts indicate the extent of the political confusion and perplexity that beset the enemy.

Furthermore, we must not forget that the return to arguing about the advantages of maintaining an Israeli presence in Lebanon and the mere contemplation of withdrawal on various pretexts indicate the failure of Israeli policy in Lebanon and the Israelis' loss of the element of pressure and influence — indicate, indeed, that they have reached a state of despair in regard to the seizing of the initiative and the circumventing of events.

On the other hand, the power of the resistance has recently become an axis for the unity of Lebanese politicians and nonpoliticians alike and consolidated their cohesion to an extent that robs the Israelis of the ability to infiltrate the internal Lebanese arena.

As to the battlefield, the enemy finds himself now in a state of perplexity as he witnesses with his own eyes the collapse of the so-called Lahad Army and the blows its officers and men have been receiving at a time when it resorted to all means and methods to face up to the resistance, but all its efforts have collapsed under the weight of the mujahidin blows, particularly as the mujahidin operations have been drawn within the framework of well-studied plans aimed at striking at the Israeli enemy and its agents at one and the same time.

There was a time when the enemy might have felt that being in the depth of the occupied zone, he would be secure. But the recent operations at Marj'uyun, Al-'Ayshiyah, Al-Qatrani, Mays, and elsewhere have made him realize that that the resistance can reach him wherever he is....

In short, the most significant point in regard to the battlefield is the enemy's feeling that he finds his hands fettered in the face of the mujahidin operations and his acceptance, on more than one occasion, that he is incapable of stopping this method of resistance operations.

We must also not forget the professionalism acquired by the Islamic resistance in regard to the selection of targets and the precise timing and implementation of its operations, a fact which puts the enemy on the defensive and in a state of expectation of more blows, with the loss of ability to act except in rare cases.

The best proof of the extent of the enemy's defeat can be seen in the lies he has begun to resort to in order to cover

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up his defeats. Frequently the enemy tries to conceal the news of his defeats, and later feels embarrassed when the news of defeats appears on the television screens, so that he is obliged to admit them, as was the case with the renowned al-Dabshah operation.

[Qusayr] Has there been any development in the quality and planning of the operations?

[Interviewee] It must be pointed out here that the Islamic resistance operations are constantly in a state of development and that the resistance fighters depend in their operations on planning, study, and analysis, and consequently benefit from the experiences they undergo, so much so that they have come now to realize the enemy's points of weakness in the morale, technical, and combat fields. This has been more prominent in recent years. If this can be called qualitative development, then so be it. But the important thing is that we will continue to move toward improvement, God willing.

[Qusayr] How do you view the situation in Lebanon in the light of these operations?

[Interviewee] What is happening now is reflected positively inside Lebanon, brings comfort to the internal arena, and provides it with greater cohesion and might or the possibility of greater cohesion and might, depending on the extent to which it interacts with the achievements of the resistance fighters, something which we have constantly been calling upon all sides to do [to interact]. For we believe and continue to believe that the more everyone rallies around the resistance work in the face of their principal enemy, the more successful they become in resolving their problems.

As to [those in] the occupied territories, they can be classified, according to our information, into three groups:

1) Those who pin great hopes on and rejoice in victory and liberation. This is the condition in which our proud people there live. With every important operation, they express their pleasure in various ways. They live under great moral conditions.

2) Those who are afraid for themselves. These are the ones who have tied their lives and destinies to the enemy. Today, they are living in a state of surprise at the new realities. Some of them have fled from the occupied territory, others have sent emissaries to the resistance to ask for pardon, while others are still in a state of reluctance and hesitation but are really lost.

3) The security officials who are directly associated with the enemy army. These are awaiting the death that will hit them at any moment. Some of them have tried to flee to other countries as has happened in the case of some of the agent symbols who have left for France and the United States.

[Qusayr] What information do you have about the recently unmasked Zionist security networks?

[Interviewee] I must point out from the outset that the Zionist enemy depends to a great extent on the security networks in the collection of information and the carrying out of his security operations in the liberated areas in pursuit of his sinister objectives. Anyone who has lived in Lebanon knows well the extent of Israeli security penetration. Hence the Islamic resistance's decisive decision to pursue those traitors so as to save our people from dangers, and at the same time to weaken the enemy. Thank God, the Islamic resistance has succeeded in breaking down a number of these networks, some of which have been in operation for several long years and have helped to bring harm and loss to the community by devious means.... The enemy regards these networks as the eye that supplies him with all the information he needs, particularly in the regions abutting on the occupied strip. For this reason, striking blows against these networks constitutes a complementary act to the work of the resistance and a major security blow to the enemy, and when added to the military blows inside the occupied territories, constitutes a great ebb in the balance and power of the enemy.

[Qusayr] In the light of the new developments as regards settlement, what repercussions does this have on the position of the resistance?

[Interviewee] We have called upon everyone from the outset to study the question of the Islamic resistance from the angle of the ideological background, which grew and was nurtured and entrenched in the minds and hearts of the strugglers and which imposes a formula that says: He who relies on God Almighty, adheres to his rights, and struggles for the cause of the security and freedom of his nation is inevitably bound to triumph. The important thing is that we know what we want and how to achieve our rights.... If we add to this the experience we have undergone in the past and are still undergoing now, we would look to the future with complete reassurance and firm confidence that the Islamic resistance which has achieved part of its objectives will continue its struggle for the achievement of all its sacred and legitimate objectives.

When some people raise questions about the future of the resistance, they do so because of the fears and suspicions they hold with regard to the wheel of the negotiations. In this regard, I wish to ask all those people, when the negotiations started at Madrid, did they imagine that the resistance would still be there

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four years after the negotiations began? What we have seen after all these years is that the Islamic resistance in Lebanon has grown prouder and more effective than before. What is taking place today with regard to the settlement and what is claimed to have been achieved should be carefully scrutinized. If some corrupt regimes have succumbed against the will of their peoples, this should not mean that the peoples themselves should help in increasing the causes of their own frustration. Indeed, there are elements of strength which should attract our eyes and which we should tie our determination to. One of these elements is the Syrian position, which stands steadfast in the face of all pressures and which supports the peoples' will in their efforts to liberate their land and resist the occupation.

Hizballah Committed To Stop Israeli 'Occupation'

BR0301153596 Paris LE MONDE in French 3 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Francoise Chipaux: "War in Southern Lebanon Continues Despite Syria-Israel Negotiations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The guns are clearly audible in the foothills of Iqlim al' Tuffah and for the people of southern Lebanon, just like the fighters of the Hizballah (the Shiite Party of God), this new year has dawned like all the others. Islamic Resistance, the military branch of the Hizballah, is continuing its struggle against the Israeli occupation of a region of southern Lebanon, and hopes for peace appear very remote here. Muhammad Ra'd, leader of the Hizballah political council, said: "We believe there are many obstacles to peace and do not think that Israel is all that attached to the peace process. We are less optimistic than many people even when we hear of progress in the negotiations."

The restart to Syrian-Israeli talks has yet to halt the Islamic Resistance operations and it is clear that this will continue to be the case for as long as the negotiations fail to make any tangible progress which could pave the way for Lebanese-Israeli talks. Mr. Ra'd stated: "We totally agree with Syria on the aims of the Islamic Resistance" (putting an end to Israeli occupation — LE MONDE editor's note).

He repeated: "Syria is well aware of what we are doing and knows that we will continue to respect our agreements." This was a reference to the 1993 agreement whereby the Hizballah agreed not to fire its Katiouchas rockets at northern Israel if in return the Jewish state agreed not to bomb civilian areas. A senior Lebanese official said: "We have no reason to ask the Resistance to stop its activities now." There is little sign of change on the ground and the Hizballah fighters are accorded the same room for maneuver as before.

In the expectation of some progress in the Syrian-Israeli talks, one official said that Lebanon was making negotiation plans for "February or March." Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri said: "Lebanon will itself negotiate (with Israel — LE MONDE editor's note) and the Lebanese Army will ensure the security of southern Lebanon." As far as Beirut is concerned, the only direct problem to be resolved with Israel is the withdrawal of the Israeli Army in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 425 of 1978. The government does not intend negotiating on the water question or the fate of the Southern Lebanese Army [SLA], a militia force equipped, trained, and paid by Israel in the Tsahal-occupied as published] zone of southern Lebanon.

Without saying so openly, the government hints that it could envisage a general amnesty for the SLA troops, but the most jeopardized 100-150 officers, whose name feature on a list, would have to leave the country. Some of them have already made plans to this end. For example, the family of the SLA leader, General Antoine Lahd, has been living in France for several years now.

Mr. Ra'd stated: "We have no objection to any measures the government may take to receive Lahad's men, as long as they leave the SLA now. Now is not the time to discuss this issue, but in any event we know exactly what each member of Lahad's army has done." The question of reintegrating the Hizballah fighters does not pose any real problems since there are only 100 or so officers and the Hizballah has enough institutions to take them in. Mr. Ra'd did stress, however: "We have our plan for paying homage to these fighters after the liberation, and we will work toward implementing it with the government or encouraging the government to implement it."

A senior Lebanese official added: "The day the peace process is signed the Hizballah must not find its way blocked and all the doors closed to it. They are Lebanese citizens and must find their place in society." For several years now, the Hizballah has been carving out a political niche for itself, and its eight deputies are some of the most active parliamentarians. A good example of its desire to participate in the reconstruction of Lebanon is the fact that the "Party of God" has a representative on the board of the Elyssar public development company which is rebuilding the southern district of Beirut, and the responsible minister is none other than the prime minister himself.

Eight months away from the general elections and the party has already started to make plans. Mr. Ra'd said: "We are very optimistic since we believe that more and more people respect us and believe in what we are doing." In addition to its aim of fighting poverty,

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the Hizballah will continue to push for an end to the occupation if the current situation persists. Otherwise the movement will call for resistance to the Israeli influence in Lebanon. Mr. Ra'd continued: "Naturally we will be Syria's allies on this point."

Boosted by reassurances with regard to its fate, which also involves Syrian-Iranian strategic relations, the Hizballah does not seem to be worrying about its future. Damascus and Beirut both consider that the fate of the Hizballah is not negotiable with Israel. Working closely with Syria, Lebanon fully intends policing its Israeli border itself. Where everything else is concerned — normalization, trade, etc. — it is clear that the agreements concluded with Israel will closely follow the model accepted by Syria.

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Media Comment on Resumption of Maryland Talks

Paper: Talks To 'Shed More Light'

JN0301173896 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0830 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 3 Jan (SANA) — The newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: The Maryland peace talks are not aimed at imposing one viewpoint on the other; neither do they seek to make gains which would undermine others' rights, to finalize a security formula which would protect the wolf from the lamb, or to achieve any of the things which wasted the past years uselessly. They seek to achieve an honorable peace as understood by honorable men. It is the kind of peace which will end the age of occupations and military arrogance. It is the equal [mutasawi], equitable [mutakafi'], parallel [mutawazi], and balanced [mutawazin] peace.

The paper stresses that the time of bellerency ended when the time of peace began.

In an article today by Dr. Fayiz al-Sa'igh, director general of the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, the paper adds: The illusions which made Israel a spearhead in the region have vanished. This is despite the fact that all the changes which took place in the world have benefited Israel. Despite this, the equation is thus far proceeding toward putting things in their right place.

The paper says: In light of this, we adhere to the option of a just peace which restores rights and land, and takes the region into the next century where the policies of aggression, occupation, and hegemony will have vanished.

The paper wonders: Will the Israelis benefit from the circumstances which made the peace option possible, and which made the U.S. Administration a catalyst, supporter, and future guarantor for this peace?

AL-THAWRAH notes that the next three days, with the extreme importance attached to them, will shed more light on the stands which have not yet been understood, on the improvised approach, and the maneuvers, whose results are not guaranteed. He who really seeks peace should respond to its requirements. In particular, he should make a public and unconditional commitment to the international resolutions, to complete withdrawal from the Golan as far as the 4 June 1967 borders, and to good intentions, and should also pledge to carry out this commitment.

AL-THAWRAH says: Thus, the region will enter the world of peace and all peace requirements can then be discussed after the removal of occupation and its existing effects in the region.

Concluding its article, AL-THAWRAH asks: Will the Israelis respond to the wager of peace brought by the new year with more seriousness than in the past? Will the three days prophesy new things in the new year?

Radio on 'Greater Than Ever' Opportunity

JN0301192396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: The second round of the U.S.-sponsored talks between Syria and Israel are to resume in Maryland today. Even though this round is viewed as exploratory like the previous one, the international community hopes it will produce steps [break in reception for 5 seconds] and achieve the desired objective. Such hope is not impossible if there are good intentions and determination to achieve just and comprehensive peace. Good intentions and determination are assessed by commitment to the bases of peace, which were defined by the international legitimacy, the Security Council resolutions, and the U.S. initiative. These bases assert that land is the essence of peace. If Israel announces that it will comply with the bases and core of the problem, the road to peace will be opened.

Experience over the past four years of the peace process has proved that the peace process has not moved forward because of the numerous forms of Israeli obstacles. Israel has tried to get both land and peace and to impose the peace it wants instead of a just peace. To Israel, even the peace dictum was not a goal in itself but a means to achieve other goals.

The new Israeli statements and positions have opened the way for the possibility of resuming the talks, therefore, Israel should move from statements to action in order to open the way for the possibility of establishing a just and comprehensive peace. Syria has always backed peace and announced from the beginning its total commitment to the bases and essence of peace. Syria does not demand any concessions but wants its rights, which were recognized by the international legitimacy and its resolutions. These resolutions clearly stipulate the return of the occupation forces to their pre-occupation positions. This means withdrawal to the 4 June lines and from the whole of southern Lebanon.

There is no justification at all for any talk about Israeli territorial concessions because the return of land to its owners is simply an implementation of the international legitimacy resolutions. So, the Israeli voices urging refusal to withdraw from the Golan or return the entire Golan are trying to entrench the occupation in conflict

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with current peace efforts. Listening to and taking such voices into account will not serve the peace process. He who wants peace should abandon occupation. Peace will bring security, stability, and prosperity to the region, but, occupation will create grudges and plunge it into the unknown, destruction, and bloodshed. The current opportunity for making peace is greater than ever, and missing it will not be in the interest of the region and its peoples.

Press Views Hopes for Talks

JN0401091196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 4 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Old Rhetoric Does Not Benefit New Talks," AL-BA'TH says: The second round of peace talks on the Syrian-Israeli track continued in Maryland. These open sessions address all issues. There is increasing speculation about the outcome of these talks and the expected momentum these talks will give to the peace process within the context of U.S. Secretary Christopher's upcoming tour of the region.

AL-BA'TH adds: Syria did not go to the Maryland talks to waste time. It did that to work to achieve a just and comprehensive peace and to ascertain whether the statements of Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and his aides — about their desire for peace and its importance with Syria and that the Golan has always been Syrian territory — are true and different from the previous Israeli position, which caused the talks to remain dormant.

AL-BA'TH notes that while the Israeli propaganda machine and its supporters try hard to give the impression that the Israeli Government's stands have created a new climate and a realistic prospect for progress on the Syrian track, Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq made statements; some of these statements are in harmony with the new rhetoric of Peres and the others are taken from the arsenal of the Rabin government. The latter are reminiscent of the Rabin government's stands that caused the talks to falter and then to come to a halt. Baraq said the extent of withdrawal should match the extent of peace. He also spoke about security arrangements that were discussed in the past and laid aside. Baraq's return to these ideas is not conducive to the positive climate and some optimistic trends which Peres sought to market.

AL-BA'TH goes on: What makes us review Baraq's statements is the fact that he knows very well that Syria, and not Israel, was the one that took the initiative to activate the peace process and that Syria always adheres to the resolutions and principles of international legitimacy. Baraq also knows that Syria, in a bold move, proposed full peace for full withdrawal when the Israeli Government was avoiding any discussion of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the foundations of the peace process and was hiding behind rejected demands.

AL-BA'TH adds: Syria is eager to provide a positive atmosphere in the Maryland talks and for Christopher's upcoming visit in a few days, however, Syria must note here that the Israeli foreign minister's rhetoric about peace and the Maryland talks reflects old stands that are not conducive at all for the current and future talks. These statements must prompt observers to wonder whether the Peres government is seriously planning to open a new chapter and to achieve peace on the Syrian track.

The newspaper asserts that Syria, as President al-Asad said, can never bargain over territory and will not accept anything short of full withdrawal from the territories that were occupied in June 1967. This withdrawal is a must in accordance with UN resolutions, the principles of the peace process, the U.S. initiative, and the natural right of any people and their adherence to this right.

In a commentary under the headline "The Required Seriousness," AL-THAWRAH says: The success of the Syrian-Israeli peace talks, which resumed in Maryland, depends on the Israeli side and its response to the conditions and requirements of peace, which are defined by the resolutions of international legitimacy and the spirit and letter of the U.S. initiative. If the peace process is to make real headway that transforms optimism into concrete reality, then there must be a real change in Israel's positions. Rhetoric should be transformed into actual deeds in addressing peace efforts. There must be an unambiguous, public commitment to the requirements for peace, especially with regard to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Golan and southern Lebanon and accepting parallel [mutawaziyah] and equal [mutasawiyah] security arrangements that do not give any side advantages over the other side.

AL-THAWRAH adds: The first round, which was held last week, showed that both sides discussed clearly and seriously a number of issues related to the components of the peace process. Although nothing specific has been reached and the gaps remain unchanged, there are hopes that the new round will achieve success and tangible positive results. This would inspire confidence in the credibility of the peace process and help overcome the many obstacles in the way of progress in the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

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AL-THAWRAH asserts that achieving such results is not difficult. In fact, this is very easy, especially if there is goodwill and resolve on the part of Israel to fulfill the obvious obligations and requirements of peace, primarily full withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines. When Israel accepts the return of the land in full to its legitimate people and commits itself to the implementation of UN resolutions, this will be a positive indicator of the truth of its peaceful intentions. This will open the door wide to serious and fruitful talks that would lay the groundwork for peace in its true and larger sense — a peace that would return rights to peoples and provide security and reassurance to all peoples of the region.

Reportage on Official, Media Remarks on Iran

Radio Reports Iran's Velayati Comments

JN0301183296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In an exclusive statement to Monte Carlo Radio today, Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati said that he and Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi would head for Damascus shortly.

Velayati asserted that Iran's relations with Syria — the most important Arab country in the region — are friendly, deep-rooted, and profound. He said that there are many major points of agreement and cooperation with Syria regarding Arab and regional issues.

Velayati also said that had it not been for cooperation with Syria, Iraq would have been divided and living in the unknown.

He added: We agree with Syria that the Lebanese national resistance should continue until the end of the occupation.

Replying to a question, he said that Lebanon is an independent state and has its national legitimate interests. Consequently, he added, its people have the right to continue resistance as long as the Israelis are occupying this land and committing aggression against this country.

Hizballah Official Calls Ties 'Strategic'

JN0301160596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1915 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut — Muhammad Shumays, member of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies and member of the Hizballah Political Bureau, has asserted that Iranian-Syrian relations are strategic.

In a radio statement today, Shumays said that Hizballah is resisting the Israeli occupation in Lebanon based on its refusal to recognize the legitimacy of this occupation of Lebanese territory, pointing out that Syria is negotiating to remove this occupation.

He added that the Lebanese resistance is exercising its right to self-defense against the Israeli shelling of civilians in southern Lebanon. He said that in light of the Israeli threats, we have no choice but to stress our right to defend ourselves and resist aggression against our land and kinfolk.

Iranian Newspaper Article on Ties Reported

JN0301164896 Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 2 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran — The Iranian newspaper KAYHAN said that Syria and Iran have had friendly relations for a long time, and the two countries have supported each other during difficult times.

In an article published yesterday, the newspaper said: Syria has proven its ability, strength, and sovereignty through its firm positions. The Syrian leadership led by President al-Asad is fully aware of what is good for its interests and the interests of its people, and this leadership is well-versed in international diplomacy, which is something that Kissinger, former U.S. secretary of state, admitted when he lauded the policy and shrewdness of President al-Asad.

The newspaper said: The Iranian Government will do what is necessary to protect Iran's friendly relations with Syria.

The newspaper criticized the position of some Iranian newspapers toward Syria following the statement issued by the Damascus Declaration states' foreign ministers. It said: The position of these newspapers is not a popular one, and it is absurd and immature to speak about what they term assistance to Syria.

It added: Journalists should think twice before blaming Syria directly and before making haphazard charges, and it is inappropriate to attack the position of a friendly country that is an ally of Iran.

The newspaper said it is unfair to publish opinions and viewpoints without taking facts into consideration.

According to observers, the KAYHAN article emphasizes the strength of the friendly Syrian-Iranian relations, and will put an end to the hasty and irresponsible articles published by Iranian newspapers over the past two days.

The newspaper IRAN NEWS said the Western media tried to present a negative image about Iran to the world concerning the Middle East peace process.

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In an editorial yesterday, the newspaper said the U.S.-sponsored Syrian-Israeli negotiations have thus far not reached a solution to the problem of the Golan.

The newspaper said the United States and Israel are trying to portray Iran as if it is a threat to the Arabs, while the reality is that Israel is the only threat to the Arab countries.

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Afghanistan

Dostam, Government First Talks 'Positive'

LD0301163396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1230 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, leader of the National Movement of the North, said that talks with Rabbani's government will continue until a final solution is found to end the fighting in Afghanistan. In a television interview the leader of the National Movement of the North said: Both sides put emphasis on ending the fighting and on removing differences.

Dr. 'Abdol Rahman, Rabbani government representative at the talks, described the outcome of the talks as absolutely positive. He refuted some media reports about the failure of the government delegation's talks in Mazar-e Sharif.

'Abdol Baqi Turkistan, the representative of the National Movement of the North in Peshawar, described the outcome of the Kabul despatched delegation's talks in Mazar-e Sharif as positive and considered the start of talks between them as good. He said: The talks were held with the mediation of Ala'eddin Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister for Asia and the Pacific, to find a solution to the differences. The talks will continue in the future.

'High-Level' Iranian Team Visits Qandahar

LD0401112596 Tehran IRNA in English 1021 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan. 4, IRNA — A high-level political experts team of Iran arrived in Qandahar, Afghanistan, on Wednesday [3 January] to discuss with the leaders of Taleban the present and future situation of this country.

The visit has taken place follwing the Iranian Government's efforts to end the ongoing Afghan conflict and repeated requests by the Islamic students of Taleban for talks on this issue.

A Taleban delegation visited Tehran last week and according to highly informed sources, during the visit they explained their views regarding the Afghan crisis.

Iranian deputy foreign minister for Asia-Pacific affairs. 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, Monday announced that Iran has given positive respond to repeated requests by Taleban to send a high-level delegation to Qandahar.

Borujerdi recently visited Afghanistan in an effort to settle difference among the warring Afghan groups.

An infored source in Islamabad told IRNA it is hoped that the Iranian deputy foreign minister will meet Hezb-e Eslami-ye Afghanistan [Islamic Party of Afghanistan] leader Golboddin Hekmatyar in the near future.

A diplomat in Islamabad said, Iran's political efforts for peaceful settlement of the Afghan crisis have led to opening of primary talks among various Afghan groups.

In the past two weeks delegations of Kabul government, National Movement of General Dostam, Hezb-e Eslami of Hekmatyar and Hezb-e Wahdat [Islamic Unity Party] of Karim Khalili have entered into dialog to end the ongoing fighting.

Hekmatyar Sends Letter to Pakistan on Refugees

LD0101154896 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Hekmatyar, the mojahed amir of Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], has sent a letter to Asef Ahmad Ali, foreign affairs minister of Pakistan. The letter reads: We commiserate with the people and Government of Pakistan about the bomb explosion in Peshawar. However, our refugee brothers should not be persecuted in the aftermath of the explosion. The letter, which was delivered to Pakistan's Foreign Ministry by Naim Mostafa, the official in charge of relations with Pakistan, adds: The refugees consider Pakistan their second home. Since they are of this view, this makes their persecution [word indistinct].

The letter adds that the Peshawar explosion and other similar incidents are the work of the common enemies of Afghanistan and Pakistan and that the two countries should work jointly to neutralize the enemies' conspiracies.

Taleban Rockets Kill 22 in Kabul

LD0301164296 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday's rocket attacks by Benazir Bhutto's Taleban killed 22 Kabul citizens and wounded 48.

Ten rockets also landed today on residential areas, injuring six people.

BAKHTAR reported that the rockets fired yesterday afternoon landed on residential areas in [words indistinct].

Government Aircraft Bombard Taleban Positions

LD0301174096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Twenty seven of Benazir Bhutto's Taleban were recently killed in the south of Kabul.

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Bakhtar reports that as a result of an operation by the country's Air Force against the positions and fortifications of the Taleban group in the training center of Charasyab, 27 men of the Taleban group were killed and a number injured.

The air force jets bombarded the Taleban positions following the so-called Taleban groups continuous rocket bombardment during the past two weeks of residential areas of Kabul city. [Words indistinct].

The exchange of fire calmed down this afternoon.

Government Suspends Publication of KABUL Weekly

LD3012214395 Tehran IRNA in English 2118 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 30, IRNA — Publication of 'KABUL', an independent weekly, has been suspended until further notice by judiciary officials of the Afghan Government.

A staff source at the weekly told IRNA here on Saturday that he and his colleagues have not been informed of the reasons of suspension. The source, who asked not to be named, added that the judiciary officials of Afghanistan have charged the weekly with violation of press regulations by printing certain articles, but have failed to name any specific case.

Another source at the weekly said the main reason for its banning is probably the disclosure of the activities of the Afghan ambassador in New Delhi including his reported contacts with drug smuggling bands and his disobeying of the instructions of the central government.

The weekly in its last edition had also urged Afghan military officials to attack strategic targets in Pakistan by missiles and aircraft.

India

Kashmir Kidnappers Repeat Claim Army Has Hostages

BK0301132396 Hong Kong AFP in English 1320 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Srinagar, India, Jan 3 (AFP) — A Muslim separatist group which abducted four Western tourists in Kashmir repeated a claim Wednesday that it was no longer holding the hostages and said they were in the custody of the Indian army.

"All four foreign hostages are with the army," the shadowy extremist group, Al-Faran, said in its first statement to the press in 24 days.

"Three of the tourists were rescued by the army on December 4 in an encounter in which our commander was killed while the fourth hostage went missing," the handwritten statement in Urdu said.

The claim by Al-Faran was essentially the same as one the group made in a statement last month following the clash between Al-Faran militants and Indian army troops.

The army has acknowledged that a top Al-Faran commander was killed in the December 4 gunbattle but said the hostages were not with him at the time. The army also categorically denied that it had rescued the hostages and said they remained in the hands of Al- Faran.

Kashmir police chief Mahinder Sabherwal told reporters here Monday that the hostages — two Britons, an American and a German — were sighted by villagers in southern Kashmir on December 23 and appeared to be in good health.

He said the Indian authorities were monitoring the movements of the hostages, who were seized six months ago, and their kidnappers.

Al-Faran, in the statement delivered to news agencies in this Kashmir summer capital on Wednesday, dismissed the police chief's statements.

"If officials claim that the four hostages are safe and healthy then it is beyond any doubt that the hostages are with the Indian army," Al-Faran said.

Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan and American Donald Hutchings were kidnapped by Al-Faran guerrillas on July 4 while on separate trekking vacations in the Kashmiri Himalayas.

German Dirk Hasert was seized on July 8, the same day as Hans- Christian Ostro, a Norwegian tourist slain by the kidnappers in August.

The Indian government has rejected repeated offers by Al-Faran to swap the hostages for 15 imprisoned Muslim separatist guerrillas.

The Muslim separatist drive in Kashmir, India's only Muslim- majority state, has left more than 12,000 people dead since 1989.

Government Denies Statement

BK0301165696 Hong Kong AFP in English 1649 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Srinagar, India, Jan 3 (AFP) — A Kashmir rebel group which siezed four Western civilians six months ago repeated its claims on Wednesday that it was no longer holding them and said that they were with the Indian army.

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The Indian government, which directly governs Kashmir, denied the claim of the Al-Faran separatist abductors of the four western visitors saying the group was trying to mislead the world.

"All four foreign hostages are with the army," the group said in its first statement to the media in 24 days.

"Three of the tourists were rescued by the army in an encounter (on December 4) in which our commander was killed while the fourth hostage went missing," it said in a handwritten statement in the Urdu language.

The claim by Al-Faran was the same as one the group made in a statement last month following the firefight between Al-Faran militants and Indian troops on December 4.

The army has said it killed a Al-Faran leader in the clash but claims the four hostages were not present at the time of the gunbattle.

The government spokesman on Wednesday said he was once again refuting Al-Faran's assertions.

"I repeat the (December 4) operation was a routine anti-militancy search and cordon operation and not meant for rescuing (the) hostages," he said. [passage omitted]

Kashmir Government Denies Claim

BK0401090696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jammu and Kashmir government says the four foreign tourists abducted by Al-Faran in July last year are still in captivity despite repeated appeals for their release on humanitarian consideration. Reacting to a statement circulated to the press in Srinagar in the name of Al-Faran, an official spokesman said the claim of Al-Faran that the foreigners are with the Army is totally misleading.

AFP Details Delhi Bombing, Responsibility Claim

BK0301143296 Hong Kong AFP in English 1427 GMT 3 Jan 96

[By Jay Shankar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Jan 3 (AFP) — At least nine people were killed and 35 injured when a powerful bomb exploded in the heart of the Indian capital's busiest commercial district on Wednesday, police and hospital sources said.

A Kashmiri Muslim separatist group claimed responsibility for the blast and said it had carried out the attack in response to "atrocities" committed by the Indian security forces in the northern Himalayan state.

Raizada Kishore, a doctor at the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital where many of the victims were taken, said at least nine people were killed in the blast. Eight of the 35 injured were in critical condition.

Deputy police commissioner Quamer Ahmed said the initial investigation had determined that the explosion, which occurred at around 3:15 p.m. (0945 GMT), was "most probably caused by a bomb."

The explosion across the street from a stand for horse-drawn carts blew out windows and collapsed several buildings, wrecked cars, scooters and bicycles and started a fire which gutted half-a- dozen stores.

Shops in the area immediately closed down as store-keepers and shoppers fled in panic, witnesses said. Police and fire-fighters sealed off the area to keep away crowds of onlookers and brought in bomb disposal squads.

"There was a deafening noise and then a lot of smoke," shopkeeper Ram Satwant Rai told AFP from his bed in the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital, where he is being treated for head injuries and a broken arm and leg.

"The building collapsed and I was knocked out," he said.

Om Prakash, a Sadar Bazaar trader, said he helped police remove bodies from the street, which was a macabre scene of severed limbs, pools of blood and discarded clothes and shoes.

"I saw nine people die instantly," he said.

A local politician, Hari Kishan Garg, said he saw a "spark" shoot out of a scooter just before the explosion occurred.

Police were placed on a high security alert following the blast and the authorities appealed to people to report any suspicious packages found at public places.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said it had received a call from a man who described himself as a spokesman for the Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front (JKIF) and claimed responsibility for the bombing.

"This blast was preceded by a similar explosion late last year in Connaught Place which was also planned by us," the caller reportedly said.

The little-known JKIF and a Sikh separatist group both claimed responsibility for a November 21 bomb outside a restaurant in New Delhi's Connaught Place shopping district which left 22 people injured.

A Muslim separatist drive in Kashmir, India's only Muslim- majority state, has left more than 12,000 people dead since 1989 but militant groups have so far confined their activities to the Kashmir Valley.

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New Delhi police commissioner Nikhil Kumar announced last month, however, that four Kashmiri Muslim guerrillas had been arrested in New Delhi for plotting attacks during India's Republic Day military parade on January 26.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training Kashmiri militants. Islamabad denies the allegation but extends moral and diplomatic support to what it describes as a legitimate struggle for self- determination.

The AFP office in Srinagar, the Kashmir summer capital, also received a phone call shortly after the blast from a man who identified himself as a member of the JKIF and claimed responsibility for the bombing.

"We will continue these blasts until the Indian security forces stop blowing up houses here and stop killing innocent Kashmiris," the caller said.

He said the group had left stickers bearing the name of the organization at the scene of the bombing, but there was no immediate confirmation of this from the New Delhi police.

Radio Says 5 Dead, 23 Injured

BK0301161796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Five persons were killed and 23 injured in a powerful bomb blast in central Delhi this afternoon. Our correspondent, Mohan Singh, reports after visiting the site of the blast:

[Begin recording] [Singh] Broken glass, badly smashed vehicles, and burnt shops bore testimony to the big blast which claimed lives of five innocent but poor people. It was around 1515 [0945 GMT] this afternoon that people of the busy Qutub Road of capital's prime commercial center Sadar Bazaar heard a loud explosion giving rise to big cloud of thick smoke and resulting in fire in some shops. According to an eyewitness account:

[Unidentified person, in Hindi] A very big and loud explosion was heard. When I looked up, I could see clouds of smoke rising in the sky and [words indistinct]. Dead bodies and injured people were littered all over the road — about 24 or 25.

[Singh] It followed a pathetic sight with some bodies lying motionless in blood and other slithering in pain, while the police is yet to ascertain the exact cause of the explosion. [end recording]

That was our correspondent.

A police spokesman said some shops dealing with small LPG [liquefied petroleum gas] cylinders, foam, and paper got engulfed in the fire. Senior police officers rushed to the spot to take stock of the situation. National security guards, forensic experts, and Crime Branch officials are investigating.

According to PTI, they have received a phone call from a Kashmiri militant outfit claiming responsibility for the blast.

Chief Minister Mr. Madan Lal Khurana visited the site of the blast and the injured in various hospitals. The union minister of state for health, Mr. Pavan Singh Ghatewal, also visited the injured at the hospital and inquired about the medical facilities being given to them.

Minister on Foreign Involvement

BK0401033996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Investigations are in progress on the bomb blast incident in Central Delhi yesterday. One more victim succumbed to injuries taking the death toll to six. The minister of state for home, Professor M. Kamsen, visited the site of blast in Sadar Bazaar area along with the Delhi police commissioner and other senior officials last night. The minister said some arrests have been made in this connection and the possibility of a neighboring country backing the terrorist group involved in the incident cannot be ruled out. The Delhi government has announced an ex-gratia assistance of 25,000 rupees each to the next of kin of those killed in the blast, 5,000 each to those seriously injured, and 3,000 rupees to those who sustained minor injuries.

Report on UK Citizen Involvement in Arms-Drop Case

BK0401055496 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 2 Jan 96 p 7

[Report by S.N.M. Abdi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] British mercenary Peter Bleach; the key- figure in the Purulia arms-dropping case, had sought to double-cross the suppliers. "I wanted to cheat the party without causing any financial loss to myself," he has confessed.

The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] today received confirmation of this from Defence Export Services, a U.K.-based firm which has its offices in London. Bleach had approached the firm when he realised that the arms deal was "of a fishy nature and meant for illegal activities".

The firm contacted the Special Branch in London and two officers told him to go ahead with the deal. They said necessary action would be taken at the right time. An official said Bleach was probably trying to gain

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immunity for himself. But under Indian laws those accused of waging war against the country cannot turn approvers.

The Indian external affairs ministry was tipped off. Consequently RAW [Research and Analysis Wing (Intelligence Agency)] alerted the Bihar government, mentioning two possible drop sites for the arms.

Bleach says he had demanded an additional $75,000 after sensing the illegal nature of the deal. It has been learnt that Bleach had helped the NEWS OF THE WORLD newspaper to expose a racket in supplying AK-47 rifles to the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

Bleach has told the CBI that the arms deal worth $165,000 was finalised in Copenhagen with one Peter Haestup in September 1995.

An advance of $50,000 meant for Bleach was deposited in a Swiss bank account, belonging to one Sam Sieve.

On September 10, Bleach returned to London and contacted Stuart Mills on the Bangladesh desk at Defence Export Services. He had met Mr Mills earlier in connection with the supply of arms to the Bangladesh government. Mr. Mills put him on to Collin Alins on the firm's India desk.

Bleach told Mr. Alins about the clandestine scheme for dropping a huge quantity of arms and ammunition "in a part of India near Calcutta". The call from the Special Branch followed and the Indian authorities were tipped off.

Meanwhile, the CBI has made its first arrest after taking over the Purulia arms case. A businessman who allegedly runs a uranium smuggling racket was taken into custody yesterday. Whether the uranium smuggling network was utilised by the suppliers of the airdropped arms is being investigated. The businessman was arrested on a tip-off from Military Intelligence (MI) here.

In another development, the six crew members of the AN-26 were produced today in the court of the SDJM [Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate] at Purulia under tight security. They were remanded to police custody for seven days. The CBI had sought a 14-day remand.

The court also allowed the CBI's petition to issue a non-bailable arrest warrant against one more person. CBI counsel submitted that the name of the person should not be disclosed in the interests of the investigation.

Eighth Culprit in Arms-Drop Case Identified

BK0401050496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The eighth culprit associated with the Purulia arms dropping case has been identified. The person calling himself Deepak alias Dayanant is wanted by the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] to elicit more information in connection with the case.

Meanwhile, the investigation is in progress with the CBI officers in Calcutta interrogating the six crew members apprehended from a Russian aircraft at Mumbai [Bombay]. A nonbailable arrest warrant has already been issued against the seventh passenger of the aircraft.

Twenty-Eight 'Hardcore Militants' Surrender

BK0401045596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Twenty-eight hardcore militants belonging to different outfits laid down their arms in the Kashmir valley yesterday. The ultras belonging to Hezbul Mojahedin, Tehrik- ul Mojahedin, JKLF [Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front], Al-Jehad, and Al-Burq surrendered at a function near Charar-i-Sharif town. This is reported to be the first time that such a large number of militants laid down arms in Badgam District of central Kashmir.

Rao's 'Cold Feet' Said To Halt Operation of Agni

BK0401053796 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 3 Jan 96 p 8

[Article by Brahma Chellaney]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Even as a national debate has begun on ways to meet the long-ignored technical and policy imperatives of India's option, a successful component programme continues to languish in political neglect. The Agni, a symbol of Indian nationalistic pride and technological prowess, has been on hold for almost two years now. Despite mouthing brave words, the Prime Minister, Mr. PV Narasimha Rao, has developed cold feet on operationalising the Agni.

It is paradoxical that India should be accused by U.S. intelligence of engaging in nuclear test preparations at Pokaran when it has shelved a political decision even on the primary delivery vehicle that would carry the nuclear payloads that it might decide to build. The Agni programme has opened a number of medium- range missile options for India, but nearly seven years after the first Agni was built, the country lacks a single deployable system. This reflects poorly on India's political leadership and decision- making. The technological options

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built with grit and determination by Indian scientists despite repressive Western and Russian export controls are being whittled at the political sacrificial table through sheer procrastination.

India has the dubious distinction in modern history of being the only nation to indisputably demonstrate its capability to build weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and then sit on that capacity for years without weaponisation despite pressing security concerns and the continued proliferation of such weapons across its frontiers. Even the most adept foreign analysts remain puzzled nearly 22 years later why India chickened out after the Pokaran nuclear detonation. The central fact is that the test was not part of a long-term blueprint of India's nuclear option, and was treated more like a technology demonstrator. The Agni, similarly, has been portrayed by the Government as a technology demonstrator. The weaponisation of any technological capability is an onerous process, and India has circumscribed its national security options by resting on its oars after one nuclear test and three Agni launches.

India's security interests demand that either it live in a world moving towards complete nuclear disarmament or it weaponise the nuclear option which it gained three decades ago when it began separating plutonium from reactor spent fuel. That is the reason why India has played a leadership role on disarmament since the 1950s while seeking to safeguard its security options. Today, as Mr. Rao has acknowledged, there is still no sign of disarmament going "beyond the realm of rhetoric into reassuring action". Rather, recent events such as the NPT's [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] permanent extension have, in Mr. Rao's own judgment, "negated" the very goal of universal disarmament.

Cost-Effective Option

In this situation, the nation has to focus attention on meeting the requirements of its security options. If India has to unshackle itself from the self-imposed political and technical constraints, trepidation and pusillanimity have to be exorcised from its policy. An approaching moment of truth confronts India: Either it addresses the nuclear option's technical and policy exigencies, or else the option will be irreparably undermined. There are no soft options, nor is any option available without significant political and economic costs.

Policy-makers have to weigh the costs of maintaining the current "do-nothing" policy on the critical security options with the costs of operationalising the country's missile and nuclear capabilities. Any long-term defence planning study will show that the costs of the former far outweigh the costs of the latter. The country does not have—and is unlikely to have in the next decade—the resources to sustain a credible military posture against China and Pakistan based solely on conventional defence. For six years as real defence spending has continued to plummet, there has been no conventional- force modernisation. Yet, if India is to fully reap the benefits of its current programme of economic modernisation, it has to resist being drawn into conventional arms racing despite the new U.S weapons package for Pakistan and the continuing Chinese military build-up.

However, without the benefit of a missile-based nuclear deterrent, a conventional defence posture by India will inevitably suck it into wasteful and debilitating arms imports and greater dependence on external suppliers. Security planning has to be premised on the fact that India will remain in the foreseeable future heavily reliant on imports for high-tech conventional weapons. A cost-effective defence strategy that permits the slashing of India's bloated military manpower and provides adequate security against two closely aligned nuclear adversaries cannot be achieved without the true weapons of deterrence.

Need To Perfect Missiles

So long as India does not come to terms with its core security demands, it cannot hope to achieve rapid economic growth or emerge as an Asian power. As home to one-sixth of the global population, its security needs for effective deterrence against WMD threats are exigent. So far, without reaping any tangible security benefit, it has borne the burden and pain of maintaining its nuclear and missile options even at the cost of being denied access to leading-edge technologies. If these options are to be real assets, the country has to meet their technical and policy imperatives.

Mr. Rao's indecisiveness on national security matters has already cost the country dearly and exacerbated Indian vulnerabilities to external WMD and missile threats. As long as the Prime Minister shies away from taking the key decision to utilise one of the available medium-range missile options, any policy strategy on the nuclear option will amount to whistling in the dark. Mr. Rao has slept on the Agni decision since the last successful test launch in February 1994. Bearing in mind that India's minimum deterrence needs dictate that it look beyond the Agni and go in for longer- range ballistic missiles, the political timidity on operationalising existing capabilities does not augur well.

The Agni had been a test case of the Rao Government's resolve to build a strong and secure India. As it nears the end of its term, this Government still has time to correct some of the damage it has wreaked on India's vital

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interests by stalling the Agni. It should sanction limited production of the Agni as the country awaits a longer-range missile. The latter calls for a renewed flight-testing programme. Months after Mr. Rao announced in Parliament that there would be more Agni tests, no test-launch is still on the horizon. With more than half a dozen countries around India armed with India-reachable ballistic missiles, the national missile force should be capable of deterring conventional and WMD threats. To be able to deliver conventional payloads to long-distance targets, the country has to perfect missiles with high levels of accuracy by mastering the jump from inertial guidance to terminal guidance. The delivery vehicle's mobility and manoeuvreability will be enhanced if it is entirely solid fuel led.

Strike by Government Employees in Kashmir 'Withdrawn'

BK0401101496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The proposed strike from tomorrow by the state government employees in Jammu and Kashmir has been withdrawn. The decision follows an agreement between the employees representatives and the state government in Jammu yesterday. An announcement in Jammu said the state government has set up a joint consultative machinery to provide a permanent forum for dialogue between the government and the employees to resolve the disputes.

Iran

Tehran Threatens Legal Action Over U.S. Decision

Protest to UN, ICJ Possible

LD0101105996 Tehran IRNA in English 1001 GMT 1 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 1, IRNA — The Foreign Ministry spokesman here Monday [1 January] said if Washington does not reject the congressional act against the Islamic Republic, Iran will lodge a protest with the U.N. and the International Court of Justice [ICJ].

Mahmud Mohammadi speaking to a group of students added the latest anti-Iran congressional move is in contradiction to all international obligations and practices, and is a flagrant violation of the U.N. Charter.

He added, "Era of anarchy in international relations has ended and the U.S. is obliged to respect international laws and commitments."

Based on international laws and regulations, governments are responsible for all actions of their parliaments, if these actions happen to be in contradiction with international laws, Mohammadi stressed.

He further said that certain international obligations should come before domestic laws.

Mohammadi said that Article Two of the U.N. Charter which U.S. considers itself as one its initiators, clearly bars all U.N. members from resorting to force and posing threat on territorial integrity and political independence of other countries and instead invites them to settle their difference by peaceful means.

He added that the U.N. Charter also compells all countries to take collective measure to halt such actions.

Velayati Says U.S. Broke Law

LD0301173096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said in an interview with the heads of several news agencies in Tehran this morning: Legal action will be taken against America over its violation of the UN Charter and breaching of the first article of the Algiers agreement.

Regarding what the Iranian government has decided in order to counter the recent move by the U.S. Congress, Mr. Velayati said: The American move is against international law, and constitutes a type of monopoly. It mixes political with economic issues and strives to impose its views on other world states. He added: World states must not pay for America's internal problems, be influenced by U.S. moves, and disrupt their relations with Iran.

Mr. Velayati said: America has no right to interfere in Iran's internal affairs, because according to the first article of the Algiers declaration, America has committed itself not to interfere in Iran's affairs politically and militarily.

Answering a question about whether Iran's response will be limited to political and legal issues, Mr. Velayati said: We have demonstrated that we are sensitive to the independence and territorial integrity of our country and are determined to defend our country's national rights and interests. The Iran-Iraq war was a testament to that.

Reporters from Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, and French agencies took part in the interview.

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Qom Rally Held Against U.S. 'Covert' Budget

LD0301201696 Tehran IRNA in English 2005 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Qom, Jan. 3, IRNA — Muslim scholars, clerics, seminary students and people from all walks of life took to street here this afternoon in their strong objection to, and their condemnation of the United States decision to allocate a 20 million budget for covert operation against the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Crying the slogans 'down with America' and down with Zionists' once again the demonstrators vowed to fully support the anti- American stance of the leader of Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyed 'Ali Khamene'i, and be under his command in their eight-point resolution.

The other part of resolution which was read at the end of the rally included the support of the demonstrators for the government of president Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, and active participation of people in the forthcoming Majles election.

The resolution finally stressed that the American conspiracy is useless against the will and determination of the Islamic Iran.

The demonstration was organized by the Seminary Management Council, Islamic Propagation Office of Qom, the Islamic Propagation Office of Seminary school and Special Cleric Brigade.

Allocation of Funds Urged To Counter U.S. Threats

LD3112091195 Tehran IRNA in English 0854 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 31, IRNA — Majles speaker Hojatoleslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri here Sunday urged deputies to work on allocation of a special budget for the Information Ministry enabling it to encounter U.S. conspiracies against Islamic countries, Iran in particular.

The remark of the speaker, made at the open session of the Majles, met with enthusiastic welcome of more than 200 deputies who responded by chanting "death to the U.S."

Hojatoleslam Nateq-Nuri also called on the Center for Studies and Research of Majles to report on the subject of American hegemony and Washington-sponsored terrorism in Islamic countries.

The speaker said that the U.S. Congressional approval is an outright confession to state terrorism. He added it is regrettable that the U.N. and its secretary general have turned a blind eye on such aggressive acts.

According to the Hojatoleslam, Washington's allocation of the budget to overthrow a popular government "is an insult on all countries wishing to stand on their own feet."

He also said that the U.S. decision to press non-American industrial partners of Iran was contrary to the agreements reached between the U.S. and Europe on international free trade which must be independent of political considerations and motivations.

Majles Letter Condemns 'Ignorant' U.S. Policies

LD3112124295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] At the end of today's Majles open session a letter, signed by more than 180 Majles members, was read out which condemned the ignorant and rash policies of the U.S. Congress and administration.

In their letter, Majles members called on all world Muslims, especially the parliamentary members of Islamic states, to protest against Washington's irresponsible and hegemonist behavior. In another part of the letter they said: We members of the Majles support the Majles speaker's proposals for countering U.S. interventions in the affairs of our Islamic homeland and confronting the policy of domination over the world of Islam. We call on the government to devise a wise and appropriate strategy to replace the reliance on U.S. industries by seeking other advanced non-American technologies. [passage omitted]

Government Boycotts Oscars To Protest U.S. Act

LD3112203295 Tehran IRNA in English 1932 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 31, IRNA — The Iranian film, 'The White Balloon', by Ja'afar Panahi, will not be screened at Oscar award ceremonies, stated Ezatollah Zarghami, movie deputy of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Culture.

Zarghami stated that this decision has been based upon Iran's demonstation of a strong objection to the United States senators' allocation of a $20 million budget to be used to support subversive activities against the sovereignity of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The movie deputy minister indicated the firm stand of the leader of Islamic Revolution and the Iranians' serious stance against the United States is an exhibition of the nation's true wishes.

Zarghami finally added that it would be most inappropriate to screen such an emotive and a sentimental film

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full of love and affection in a nation which is ruled by world arrogant power under totally inhuman conditions and whose decisions run against the delicate feelings of both Iranian children and women.

The movie deputy concluded by saying that the directors of the film and majority of artists have supported this decision made by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Paper Says U.S. To 'Regret' Decisions

NC0401100696 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 25 Dec 95 pp 1, 15

[Editorial: "America in a Reactive Position"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Until yesterday America resorted to all types of crimes, but did not take responsibility for them; today Washington used explicit words to overtly and officially approve its plans to perpetrate crimes and attempt assassinations in other countries. It even allocated a budget for its terrorist acts.

America's intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries is nothing new. But in most cases, Washington preferred to deny its overt or covert roles in crimes and terrorist acts and denied any type of interference in savageries. But now, with the approval of a $20-million budget for terrorist acts against Islamic Iran, Washington officials have brandished their swords and are declaring in a bullying tone that they have terrorist plans for confronting Iran.

The Clinton administration's hostile acts and the delirious statements by its incompetent secretary of state against Iran show their true ambition. The Zionists have once again exploited the stupidity of Clinton and of his assistants in order to aggravate the hostile atmosphere between America and Iran, and they have been the cause for the allocation—for the first time—of an official and overt fund for hostilities against Iran and for terrorist acts against the Iranian nation.

It would be advisable for us to think for a moment about the meaning of this phenomenon and to see what Washington is gaining by propagating such policies. Let us not forget that America's enmity with Iran and Islam and with the Islamic Republic is nothing new. Washington's enmity toward popular movements started from the very first days after the 15 Khordad 1342 [5 June 1963] movement. This enmity continued throughout the various phases during which the Islamic Revolution culminated its victory, and it is continuing until this day in the form of hostility against our nation. Washington has not spared even one moment in its mischief and crimes against this system, this revolution, and this nation. But, at the same time, we should not take Washington's new decision lightly because it is tantamount to declaration of overt enmity with the Islamic Republic's nation and system, and should naturally be viewed within this context.

America knows and should become better aware of the fact that enmity with the Islamic Republic and allocating a budget for crimes against the Iranian nation will not go unanswered and that naturally those nations in all the corners of the world that support the Islamic Revolution will not lose any opportunity to make America regret its spiteful acts and to thwart Washington's daily-increasing plots. This may be a "test" [preceding word in English] from Washington's point of view and the Zionists may want to assess global reaction to such a policy. But the point is that no one in this vast world will consider America's decision to adopt such bullying and maniacal policies to stem from its wisdom, but will consider it precisely to be a sufficient proof that all this stems from the fact that America feels incompetent and sees itself as a failure vis-a-vis the world movement of Islam, hence its efforts to resort to state terrorism.

This insane decision manifests the peak of the weakness of a flimsy superpower and proves that Washington's policies are actually in an impasse and that America is willing to resort to any type of mischief and crime in order to end this situation. Let us not forget that all this hue and cry has culminated precisely at a time when Syria is to be drawn to the negotiating table with the Zionists. In other words, international Zionism is trying to shift attention to another point and to hide what is actually happening in the Arab-Israeli compromise process from the public. And possibly one of the most major objectives that America and Israel pursue in all this may be to keep the minds of the supporters of the world movement of Islam occupied and to place them in a defensive position so that they can continue with the Arab-Israeli compromise deal. Even if this is the objective the Zionists pursue, again nothing changes in the gist of the matter.

Opposition with the disgraceful compromise process with Israel is not exclusive to Iran and to the followers of the world movement of Islam today. All those who are capable of making a logical and brave assessment of issues know that the Arab world has been disarmed vis-a-vis Israel and has been forced to accept disgraceful conditions. Under such conditions, the smallest incident can upset the situation in the Middle East to the detriment of America and Israel and foil the Zionists' disgraceful efforts, and once again place America and the Zionist occupiers in a reactive position.

The "Intifadah" is a clear example of this and there is no need for further explanation. Everyone knows that this outcome of the world movement of Islam has

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rubbed Israel's nose in the mud. Therefore, our question today is: How will the world movement of Islam react against Washington's new policy? Who knows? This reaction may be as quick as lightning and so vast in the form of a coup de grace against Israel and will direct developments in the region and throughout the world of Islam toward an irreversible and serious direction which America will regret. In that case, the thoughts of reviving or ensuring America's illegitimate rights will become nothing but castles in the air for Washington's officials. God willing.

Velayati on Solving 'Problems' With Syria

JN0301212696 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Report by Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni in Tehran]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In an exclusive statement to Radio Monte Carlo, Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati said he and Dr. Hasan Habibi will visit Syria shortly as scheduled. He added that it is in the two countries' interest to quickly solve the problems hampering the continuation of cooperation between Damascus and Tehran.

Asked if there is a basic disagreement with Damascus posing danger to the strategic relationship between the two countries, Velayati said: Our common views with Syria are far more than with any other Arab country and our stands are close to each other. We worked together in good and bad days and we will remain together in the next stages. Iraq was the most recent file on which we worked together. Had it not been for our cooperation with the Syrians, within the framework of the three-way meetings, which also included the Turks, on the question of Iraq, Iraq would have been divided and living in the unknown. Velayati added: Iran's relations with Syria are deeply rooted relations of friendship. Some differences in viewpoints will not undermine such relations. Consequently, there is no danger to these relations. [passage omitted]

Syrian Envoy on Relations, Peace Process

NC0401074996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Recently a session of the member-countries of the Six Plus Two Pact was held in Damascus. Our correspondent Tashakkori interviewed the Syrian ambassador in Tehran on the topics discussed at the session and on its communique, which referred to the United Arab Emirates' [UAE] dispute with Iran over the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf. This communique was criticized by the Islamic Republic of Iran. We invite you to listen to our correspondent's report.

[Begin Tashakkori recording] In answer to a question on his opinion on the recent communique issued by the member-countries of the Six Plus Two pact in Damascus, Mr. Ahmad al-Hasan, ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic to our country, answered: Various topics were discussed during this session. Among these topics was the charter on the joint performance by the Arabs, the crisis in the Red Sea between Eritrea and Yemen, the Bosnian problem, as well as the disputes between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the UAE. He said: Syria has always believed that all disputes between Iran and any one of the Arab countries should be solved peacefully and through fraternal negotiations. This is the best way to achieve a favorable outcome.

Commenting and assessing the future of Middle East peace, he said: Although more than four years have passed since the Middle East peace process started, the Syrian Arab Republic has not yet achieved a desirable outcome. However, there were signs in recent remarks by the Zionist regime's officials which can be considered to be in the direction of the continuation of the peace process with favorable outcomes for Syria. This is the reason why Syria entered the peace talks which had been halted for six months. But of course no opinion can be stated on what the final outcome of these negotiations will be.

In answer to a question on how he assesses Iranian-Syrian relations, Ahmad al-Hasan said: Relations between Syria and Iran are strategic and very good. The reason why I state this is the recent session of the supreme commission between the two countries headed by the Iranian and Syrian vice presidents. These sessions are held once in a while and matters of interest and regional issues are seriously discussed and examined. These relations have proven their firmness during the past 18 years, and we believe that they will become even stronger. [end recording]

Commentary: Syria Facing 'Painful Dilemma'

LD0301191596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary: "Syria Facing a Difficult Choice"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] After a four-day interruption, the second round of the Damascus-Tel Aviv talks are scheduled to resume in the State of Maryland in the United States today, Wednesday, 3 January. In the first round of talks the two sides were preoccupied with deliberating on some previous obstacles only. According to the Israeli officials, basic issues were not even

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brought up between the two delegations. Clearly the repatriation and withdrawal of the Israeli army from the Golan Heights is still the main issue and dispute between both sides. The interesting thing is the Israeli prime minister's comment on the Maryland negotiations. He says the extent of Israel's withdrawal from Golan depends on how much concessions Syria will make to Israel. In other words, Israel's position to strike a comprehensive peace deal with Syria, establishing diplomatic, cultural, and economic relations with Syria, is a precondition for the extent of Zionist army's withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Of course this round of talks also will be held behind closed doors and with a news blackout. But it can be predicted that in the new round of talks deep gaps between the two sides will cause the negotiations to stall in the preliminary steps.

Political observers believe that since there is less than 10 months left to the holding of elections in the United States and occupied Palestine, hasty and wide-scale efforts have been underway to wrap-up the Arab-Israeli peace talks. As a matter of fact, considering the internal politics crisis Tel Aviv is wrangling with at the moment, Shim'on Peres' Labor Party is trying to conquer the Syrian bunkers and open the lock of negotiations using the Golan key. This way he can draw the votes to himself in the October elections of this year and, according to Tel Aviv officials, pave the way for peace with Syria which will open another door to Israel to obtain its long-run objectives in the Middle East and make it possible to realize the Greater Israel.

On the other hand, the American Democrats in the White House are also after a winning card in the upcoming U.S. presidential elections to stay in the White House for another four-year term, and the imposing of their desirable peace on Damascus will give them the card.

In between all this, a fundamental question is being raised in the religious and Arab circles of the Middle East. They ask: In the sensitive condition the Arab world is in right now, will Syria, after four years of resisting the Israeli blackmail, create another Camp David? Undoubtedly, during the 28 years of occupation of the Golan and other Arab territories by Israel, Syria has always referred to the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, demanding the withdrawal of Israeli army from the occupied territories, repatriation of all Syrian lands, and the establishment of security on both sides of the border between Syria and occupied Palestine.

However, what has happened now, is that Syria, outside the framework of the complete implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions, is facing such painful dilemma.

Oil Revenue Said Buoyant Despite U.S. Sanctions

LD0301192896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The head of the marketing department of the National Iranian Oil company, Mr. Hojjatollah Ghanimifard, in an interview with the UNITED PRESS announced: Iranian oil revenues in the current fiscal year, which began on March 21 1995, went $1 billion above the set objectives of the approved budget of this year despite U.S. sanctions against the country. He also referred to the vast market for Iranian oil in the world, saying the sale of Iranian oil to Asia-Pacific in the year 1995 was faced with no difficulty, and in this regard more potential facilities are available in Singapore, China, and India.

According to economic experts, the sale of Iranian oil, despite imposition of the U.S. sanctions against the country, shows an increase. This is indicative of the failure of the U.S. policies toward the positions of independent world states, including the Islamic Republic of Iran. American administration, to guarantee the interests of international Zionism and to get their Jewish American vote in the upcoming presidential elections in the U.S., has enforced the plan for economic and oil embargo against the Islamic Republic of Iran since June 1995 [sentence as heard]. The U.S. since then forced other countries to abstain from buying Iranian oil or making investments in the oil fields in the country. Despite this sanction, during the past few months international oil companies in Europe and Asia have tried very hard to participate in the oil projects in Iran. As soon as the agreement on expansion of oil and gas fields of the Conoco Company was cancelled, the French Total company signed an agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On the whole one can say that that sale of Iranian oil, with regard to the current developments and other oil-rich regional states, will continue bringing more foreign currency into the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Commentary Views U.S. Military Presence in Bosnia

LD0101162296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 1 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The first American heavy tank units were stationed in northern Bosnia on Sunday December 31st. The American army has deployed these

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units in Bosnia to participate in an operation which, for the first time in NATO's history, is going to last for a full year's time.

Political observers believe that, behind the explosion out of all proportions by the Western press of the American and other NATO members' military presence in Bosnia to establish peace in that country, lie concealed realities which have their roots in traditional competition between the great powers in the crisis- oriented region of the Balkans.

In fact, the significant presence of the American forces, who comprise one third of the total NATO forces in Bosnia, can be evaluated from different perspectives. On the one hand, this action crossed out the dream of creating a unified and independent Europe from the U.S. and, on the other hand, it increased the concerns of the European public opinion of the division of the European continent into east and west Europe, because the stationing of the American and NATO forces in Bosnia and the Balkans is considered to be the actual division of Europe across certain lines in that crisis-stricken region.

Also, the large number of American forces in Bosnia has caused a kind of frustration for the West's political circles. Europe has been told that it requires U.S. support for security issues of the parliament [as heard]; although these sources are trying to somehow justify the U.S. presence in Bosnia by saying that the U.S. and Europe are political and military allies and that the U.S. presence in Bosnia will not last more than a year.

Anyway, the U.S. military deployment in Bosnia, that is an European country, is the first serious step by Washington to gain a form of military position in the Balkans after paving the grounds politically. The three-and-a-half year war in Bosnia is proof that there is confrontation between Europe, Russia, and America. During the Cold War, Berlin was the borderline between the East and West. Now the Balkans is the borderline between east and west Europe. The U.S., under the excuse of preserving peace in Europe, is strengthening its position in that continent. Europe is paying a high price for this end, since the U.S. is having the largest share [as heard]. This is happening at a time when political and security equations of Europe will be affected by the U.S. presence in that continent.

President Inaugurates New Nuclear Research Facility

LD0201092396 Tehran IRNA in English 0857 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 2, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi—Rafsanjani inaugurated the new center for research and application of new energies of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization (AEO) here Tuesday.

Head of AEO, Reza Amrollahi, briefed the president on progress and projects of AEO. He said that the first nuclear power plant of the country is to go on stream by the end of the second five-year development plan (1995-1999).

Amrollahi further outlined the achievements of the organization in development of nuclear technology. He said the organization is prided with the fact that it produces 90 percent of the total needs of the country in the field of radio-pharmaceuticals.

Larijani: Parties Not Successful in Third World

LD0101160096 Tehran IRNA in English 1421 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 1, IRNA — Vice-Chairman of Majles Foreign Policy Commission Mohammad Javad Larijani said here on Monday [1 January] that although political parties could play an important role in the elections, healthy elections were not dependent on the political parties.

Speaking with the reporter of IRNA's special team covering the forthcoming parliamentary elections, due to be held on March 8, Larijani said what is important is to hold healthy elections, adding that experience has shown that political parties have not been successful in the Third World countries.

Larijani said almost in the past two decades political parties in the countries with liberal democratic systems or in industrialized countries have been faced with crippling structural difficulties after passing behind hard times of development. Larijani said in his view holding healthy elections is possible without being engaged in political games as is prevailing in the liberal democratic states. Larijani who is a parliament representative for Tehran constituency said all those who believe in progress and prosperity of the Islamic Republic of Iran should make efforts for the development of the country.

On the next parliament, Larijani said the fifth Majles should well recognize its position and deal with its task more efficiently. It should supervize over the executive institutions and find suitable solutions to the problems, he added.

Those who say there is no proper political atmosphere for the elections are in fact downgrading the government and to some extent blackmailing the system, Larijani stated. However, he stressed, the Islamic system should not give any concession because participation in

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the elections is a religious and national duty, the parliamentarian said.

Asked whether the technocrats are being supported by President Rafsanjani, he said, the president is a prominent figure who has spared no effort to safeguard the Islamic Republic and form an efficient system. Therefore, he added, the president would not support any specific group or faction. However, Larijani said, if by technocrats the reference is being made to those who do not observe the Islamic ideals, no doubt President Rafsanjani would not back them. But, if the reference is being made to those who believe in the Islamic ideals and those who are serving development of sciences and technology in order to materialize such ideals, obviously they would be supported by both the leader and the president.

He said the press should contribute to holding healthy elections and should avoid injecting suggestive ideas which may cause doubt among the people.

Segregation of Religion from Politics Discussed

NC1912205595 Tehran SALAM in Persian 11 Dec 95 p 2

[Answer to Reader's Question from the "Hello SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Caller] Your newspaper has been publishing material negating the segregation of religion from politics. Unfortunately, in our country, especially after the revolution, the issue of religion and the clergy has been misunderstood. The root of this misunderstanding lies in the actions and propaganda of the government echelons.

Everyone knows that schoolchildren, through college students, to bazaar merchants, and so on have some political acumen. That goes for the aware and combatant clergy too. But with every positive and negative act by the government or the clerics at the helm of the administration, there are murmurings that it would be proper to separate them from official positions. But it is not very clear to our nation why this stratum considers itself superior and surrounds itself with an aura of sanctity such that one Majles deputy announced that the next president should also be a cleric. Do all the deputies concur with this deputy's remarks? If the next president is not a cleric, will religion be separated from politics?

[SALAM] We have elaborated on religion and politics, the clergy and government, incorrect propaganda on the unified functioning of officials and the principles of the system, and other similar topics that are important. Hence we will only touch on one point here: Why is it that in the previous regime, with all its agents' vices and all its destruction, causing the people to rise up and topple the corrupt regime and its agents and drive them away from government, no one ever mentioned separating government from the university-educated? Were the officials of that regime not educated and trained in a Western environment? By the same token, could anyone generalize that since they acted wrongly, all the university- educated should be removed from government?

With regard to the clerical stratum, some groups have gone to extremes; others carry out propaganda that if an official or someone occupying a high position is a cleric, no one has the right to question his actions. Anyone who does is opposed to the clergy. Another group has fallen into this vortex in a different way, such that if one or more clerics have acted incorrectly, or have been unsuccessful in their assignments, they contend that the clerics should be removed from government.

These two approaches are two sides of the same coin. Like the two blades of a pair of scissors, both seek to eliminate the clergy.

Pakistan

'Strong Exception' Taken to Indian Minister Remarks

BK0401113196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has taken strong exception to the statement of the Indian minister of state for external affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia, in which he described it as a terrorist state out to destabilize India. A Foreign office spokesman told newsmen in Islamabad today that India is engaged in an arms buildup, including nuclear and missile development, and extensive purchases of sophisticated weapon systems internationally beyond its legitimate defense needs. He said India is also employing intelligence agencies to create trouble in Pakistan, particularly in Sindh province, where a number of Indian agents have been caught red- handed. He said it is in fact India which was involved in terrorist activities.

Suspect in Peshawar Bombing Said To Escape to Kabul

BK0401093596 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 4 Jan 96 pp 1, 11

[Report by Murtaza Malik]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar, Jan 3 — The suspected Persian- speaking Afghan involved in the

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bomb blast causing an unprecedented devastation in Peshawar on Dec 21 had reportedly escaped to Kabul via Islamabad and Quetta.

Realising the grave risk involved in taking the easier route via Bara and Torkham which had been put under red alert immediately after the blast, he [words indistinct]. From the federal capital he was said to have taken a flight to Quetta and from there he proceeded to Afghanistan.

Official sources said the possibility of his exit via the said route could not be ruled out and this was being looked into but it might not have been an afterthought and seemed to be a preplanned strategy. Abdul Matin, whose sketch had been drawn on the basis of the evidence collected from different sources and since widely publicised it was stated was a previous convict in Afghanistan and escaped from the prison. He reportedly had strong links in the present Afghan government.

Meanwhile, the Arabs residing in Peshawar were vehemently trying to demolish the impression that the Afghans were involved in the blast. The Arabs too couldn't have done it as they were the frequent visitors to the Wadood Sons shopping centre which had been completely destroyed by the blast and the fire that followed. Even at the time of the blast they claimed some of the Arabs were present at the site and one of them had been killed and three injured.

Surprisingly however, these Arabs, many of whom were residing in Peshawar illegally, seemed to have taken upon themselves the task to absolve the Afghans of the charge, saying that had they been really involved they would have targeted some government installation instead of parking the bomb-carrying vehicle at the busy shopping centre and killing innocent people. The whispering campaign, sounding highly intriguing, did establish the close links between these Arabs and the Afghans. The Arabs while defending the Afghans, however, were unable to explain as to who else could be involved.

It may be added that there are about 400 Arab nationals residing in Peshawar with most of them having come here in search of jobs or earlier to participate in the Afghan Jehad.

According to the Arabs themselves, they had come here out of compulsion as many of them were wanted by their respective government's in different crimes. One of these Arab nationals asked as to why didn't they choose some other country for the purpose, said that Pakistan was considered a safe heaven. Being a big country, it was easier to go into hiding without being noticed.

The crackdown against the Arabs initiated more than a year ago, had compelled many of them to go underground for a while but the pressure from some of the political parties had helped them to come out of the hideouts. The majority of the Egyptians however didn't return and they were believed to be in Afghanistan being taken care of by some of the Afghan groups. At present the Egyptians numbered only three to four while the majority of them belonged to Algeria, Sudan, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

MQM Committee Calls For 'Protest Day' 4 Jan

BK0401045296 (Internet) MQM NEWS in English 2 Jan 96

[Issued in Karachi on 2 January]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] Coordination Committee called a day of mourning on January 4, 1995 [year as received] to protest the ruthless extra judicial execution of four young MQM workers in the poor Muhajir neighborhood of Gharibabad in the largest Pakistani City of Karachi. MQM Coordination Committee appealed everyone to observe the protest day. They appealed to keep the shops, offices, ports and educational institutions closed and also to keep the transports off the street.

MQM Coordination committee, in a press release, said that in last three weeks, government troops have extra judicially killed 16 young MQM workers while they were in custody. They said that the cruelty inflicted upon Muhajir Nation by the current government of Benazir Zardari is far worse than the Human Rights violations in Kashmir and Bosnia.

MQM Coordination Committee asked all the democratic nations of the world and human rights organizations to take notice of state terrorism and genocide in Pakistan. MQM coordination committee also warned the government that failing to stop the extra judicial execution of Muhajirs may result in 2 day or indefinite strike calls, and government would be responsible for this.

MQM Head Vows To Continue Fight for Rights

BK0401051596 (Internet) MQM NEWS in English 2 Jan 96

[Issued in London on 31 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] Leader of the Movement Altaf Hussain, in a message to the nation on New Year Eve, said that 1995 was the year of sorrow and grief which every Muhajir house has experienced. He said that the ruthless and racist government has broken all the laws of a civilized nation

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against the Muhajir Nation. He said that when we look back at 1995, we see nothing but dead bodies of Muhajir youths killed by the paramilitary rangers on order of the government of Benazir Zardari, we hear nothing but painful voices of Mohajir youths from a dark dungeon of government safe houses where government agencies and paramilitary troops inflict barbaric torture. He said that this year Islamic Republic of Pakistan witnessed the rape of young teenage Muhajir daughters and detention of young Mohajir women. He reminded everyone of the plight of Raees Fatimah and Shazia Farooq, both of whom are under arrest and in Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi and going through the worst form tortures. It is also worth mentioning that Shazia Farooq, wife of late Farooq Patni Shaheed who was extra- judicially executed by Pakistani Paramilitary Troops and Police, was seven months pregnant when she was taken to jail in August.

He also said that this year PPP [Pakistan People's Party] Zardari Group's government created new examples of kidnapping, torture, murder while in Police or Paramilitary Custody, extra judicial execution and revenge killing. This year has reminded the Muhajir nation of Military Operation of 1971 in then East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh).

Mr. Altaf Hussain, recognized the sacrifices Muhajir Nation is giving for the truth, justice and equal human rights in Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He vowed to keep fighting for the equal rights of all Haq Parasts and for the rights of Muhajir Nation. He prayed to Almighty Allah that, May Allah bring peace and an end to the Government cruelty and ruthlessness - Amen. He asked Muhajir nation to stand fast in 1996 the way they have been in 1995.

Leaders Criticize U.S. Actions Against Iran

LD0301110396 Tehran IRNA in English 1002 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan 3 (IRNA) — Politico- religious personalities in Pakistan have severely condemned the covert operation planned by the United States to dislodge the democratic and constitutional government of Iran.

"It is a glaring violation of the charter of the United Nations and the world body should take note of this," Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani, head of Jamiat Ulema Pakistan and the National Solidarity Council, said today in Karachi.

He termed the approval of the 20-million dollar bill by the U.S. House of Representative as blatant interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign country and urged Muslims to unite against America.

Calling such a move as "an act of open terrorism," Maulana Noorani added that America's announcement of its decision was an acknowledgement that it was the leading terrorist in the world.

He said the United Nations was playing into the hands of America and proposed the shifting of the U.N. Headquarters to another country.

Meanwhile, Allama Iftikhar Naqvi, a leader of Tehreeke Jafria of Pakistan, praised the firm stand of Pakistani senators against American actions towards Iran.

He pointed out that Washington is using pressure tactics to make Islamic countries recognize the illegitimate Zionist regime.

Senators belonging to different political and Islamic parties in their session last week strongly condemned the allocation of a budget to undermine the Iranian Government and demanded that America should be stopped.

They also called on the United Nations to declare the United States a terrorist state and oust it from the world body.

Leghari on India's 'Threat' to Regional Security

BK0101145596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president has said Pakistan does not desire any tension and is against any arms race in the region, but unless the Kashmir dispute is resolved, peace and stability cannot return to this region. Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said this while addressing the 64th midshipmen commissioning parade at the Pakistan Naval Academy in Karachi today.

The president said no military solution is possible in Kashmir, and sooner India realizes this the better it will be. The main threat to the stability and security of the region was Indian obduracy and aggression in the outstanding dispute on Jammu and Kashmir. This is the core issue between Pakistan and India, which has retarded peace and development in the region for almost half a century.

The president said: For the last several years, more than 600,000 Indian forces have unleashed a reign of terror in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and are involved in gross violation of human rights there. Despite the largest concentration of troops anywhere in the world, India has failed to break the will of the Kashmiri people and solve the problem through military means.

The president said Pakistan will continue to play an active and positive role for peace and stability in the

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area and promote friendly relations with the Muslim and other countries. Reaffirming the government's resolve to strengthen the country's maritime defense, he said steps have been taken toward modernization of the naval fleet. The Navy will soon have a home port at Ormara and beginning has also been made in building ships at home.

Bhutto on Trade With India, Domestic Issues

BK3112151595 Islamabad THE NATION in English 31 Dec 95 pp 1, 13

[Report by Syed Nadeem]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD—Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto says Pakistan wants to establish trade ties with India on an even- playing field, protecting at the same time its own industry.

She was talking to newsmen on Saturday at the residence of Maulana Ismail Zabih, a veteran of Pakistan movement. She remained there for some time and shared with him some thoughts about Quaid-i- Azam [Mohammad Ali Jinnah] and days of the independence movement. Maulana's book on Islamabad also came under discussion.

To a question about a statement of Leader of the Opposition Mian Nawaz Sharif that he would help government normalise trade relations with India and about giving that country MFN [most favored nation] status, the Prime Minister said:

"I will welcome if he comes and takes me into confidence as Prime Minister of the country, what he meant by his statement and what were his objectives. Instead of coming to know about it through the Press, he should talk directly to me. I think the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition should have a working relationship and they should have dialogue on national issues.

"Trade and politics are two different things. Similarly, international obligations and international laws should be kept separate. According to the international law, Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory.

"Since we are members of World Trade Organisation, we have to sit with India just as we sit with them in the United Nations and Non- Aligned Movement. But I don't think trade with India can start tomorrow. It requires a lot of negotiations. We have to see what sectors to be subsidised and what to be left out. We want free trade on an even-playing field. We don't want that while one side subsides [as published], the other goes on to destroy a particular industry."

But as far as Kashmir was concerned, she said relations with India could not be normalised until this issue was resolved according to the UN resolutions. To another question she said Pakistan was always ready to hold meaningful talks with India on Kashmir. About a possible attack by India in coming April, the Prime Minister said there was no danger of any such thing at present.

Asked about any fresh offer to Mr. Sharif, she said she had already given him an open invitation. "He says he wants early elections. My point of view is that, short of early elections, I am ready to discuss everything."

On Milli Yakjehti [Islamic Solidarity] Council's strike call on Saturday, she said it had received a very lukewarm response.

"Some transport and business went on as usual. But we have a free country and everybody has a right to make his viewpoint through protest as long as it remains peaceful. It is up to the people to choose whether they want the business to remain open or whether they want a shutdown.

"The government is not affected by such tactics. In fact it helps in strengthening the government's claim that today there is democracy and everybody has a free choice. We are personally against strikes and agitation. Why because such tactics are adopted when there is dictatorship and the Constitution is abrogated, or when there is colonialism. But today we have Parliament and there is no need for strikes. They should wait for next elections and take their case to the people's court.

"As for allegations against the movement for pursuing un-Islamic agenda, the religious parties had contested the last three general elections with this slogan but people had rejected their manifesto. We all know that they had also opposed Quaid-i-Azam on similar grounds. Therefore when they also criticise me in the same way I feel I am on the path.

"However, Ulema have an important role to play and we respect them. We wish that they should work for the character-building of the people. Ulema should spread the message of Islam which teaches us about the rights of elders and orphans. Politics Are for the politicians."

To a question, she made it clear that Quaid-i-Azam had thought of a liberal but non-secular Pakistan.

About her meeting with MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] negotiator Ajmal Dehlvi, she denied it saying if it really took place, the press should inform her about the details.

About Nawaz Sharif's demand that the government should announce its formula to resolve Karachi problem, Ms. Bhutto said: "Our formula is already there. We have

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asked Altaf Group to get rid of militants and give up Kalashnikovs. They have a right to be politicians. They should come forward and work with us for the good of Karachi, Sindh and rest of the country."

She said the Leader of the Opposition should make it clear whether he wanted to endorse the government's agenda or vice versa. "As for his formula, people have already experimented it. When Nawaz Sharif was in power, he acceded to the demand of Altaf Group that the Chief Minister should be from the minority party and that it should be nominated by Altaf Hussain. Everybody knows what followed this; the killings, dacoities [robberies] and the terrorism. Army had to be called in.

"His government registered cases against Altaf Hussain and his militants. Nawaz Sharif should make it clear whether he really wants peace in Karachi or he has a different stance when in opposition. It was again Altaf Group's militants who killed 15 innocent people on Friday. Everyone wants Altaf Hussain to ask his men to stop militancy and take the avenue of politics . They have the right to sit with the government or the opposition."

The Prime Minister went on to say "if they want to join hands with the government we can work together for Karachi's development. We have already launched the Rs [rupees] 121 billion Karachi package which included Mai Kullachi Road, Shahrah-i-Faisal Flyover, Kalla Bridge and Jinnah Bridge, Northern Bypassw, $2 billion projects at Port Qasim and $600 million on transmission lines."

She said her government wanted to serve Karachi's people and give them a sense of security. "New Sindhis and old Sindhis have one blood. They have been living like a family and it will continue in future as well."

About the illegal immigrants, she said "if we think of rounding up every illegal immigrant, we will be over stretching ourselves a little. But we are examining a solid plan to check it in the future. We are against this trend and we will definitely act against it wherever there are blatant cases of illegal immigration."

Altaf Group 'Terrorists' Killed in Encounter

BK0301035896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Four terrorists belonging to the Altaf Group, who were allegedly involved in the killing of five members of law enforcement agencies, were killed in an encounter with police at Gharibabad locality in Karachi yesterday. The names of those killed in the encounter are: Naseem, Akram, Shabbir, and Salim Mota. One Kalashnikov rifle and three TT pistols were recovered from their possession.

In an encounter with Gulbahar police yesterday, one terrorist was killed, whereas six of his accomplices managed to escape. According to police, this terrorist is wanted in connection with a number of crimes of abductions, murders, and robberies.

According to a press note issued in Karachi, one person was killed and seven injured in shooting incidents by unidentified persons in various parts of the city yesterday.

Two Injured, Vehicles Damaged in Karachi Explosion

BK0201155896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A bomb placed on a motorcycle exploded in the Sadar area of Karachi this afternoon, injuring two people standing nearby. The explosion also damaged some motorcycles and cars.

Minister Berates Altaf Hussain for Harboring 'Terrorists'

BK0201034196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 2 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Criticizing the Muhajir Qaumi Movement leader Altaf Hussain for protecting the criminals, Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, said his frequent strike calls deprive poor daily wage earners of their livelihood.

In a statement in Islamabad, the federal minister has taken note of Altaf Hussain's alleged statement that the present rulers will be tried for what described as crimes against Muhajirs. He said Altaf Hussain will have to face trial for harboring criminals and for committing terrorist crimes against innocent people in Karachi. The federal minister said Altaf Hussain is issuing directives and orders to his stooges in Pakistan to commit acts of terrorism.

Dubayy Seen as 'Safe Haven' for Drug Barons

BK0301100496 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 3 Jan 96 pp 1, 10

[Report by Kamran Hoti]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi — Having failed in establishing a working relationship with Anti Narcotic Force (ANF), the nation's premier anti-drug agency, some of the leading figures in drug trade from Pakistan have moved to Dubayy the hub of business and trading

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activities in the Middle East, this appeared in an investigation by the News Intelligence Unit (NIU).

Last month the country's most wanted alleged drug trafficker Ayub Afridi, having vast business interest in Dubayy had surrendered at the United States Consulate in that city. Like many other Pakistani drug barons, Ayub Afridi also had a legitimate business cover in Dubayy. The Dubayy arm of the Ayub Afridi's business enterprise used to look after his interest in the multi billion rupees Afghan Transit Trade (ATT).

Ayub Afridi is understood to have decided to surrender before the United States authority as a last option after his indirect attempts to broker a workable" deal with the Anti Narcotic Force collapsed. Afridi is understood to have sent a number of messages for a settlement to the Brigadier Mohammad Akbar, the ANF director in Peshawar and also to Major General Salahuddin Tirmizi, the much regarded, chief of the organization.

Sources said that Ayub made at least three secret visits to Dubayy before he decided to present himself before the US authorities. Western missions in Dubayy do not have officials from anti narcotics agencies' of their respective countries and in most cases drug liaison officials attached with Western diplomatic missions in Karachi monitor drug scene in Dubayy.

Interviews conducted with informed sources and officials in Karachi and Dubayy recently disclosed that as the ANF tightened its net around active drug traffickers and did not even spare a PPP [Pakistan People's Party] member of the national assembly in its campaign against the big fish, leading names in the drug trade left Pakistan for a low profile status in Dubayy.

Abdul Razzak Awan alias Razzak alias Bha, now a resident of Dubayy, is wanted to authorities in Pakistan and in the United States for his role in some of the world's best known drug seizures. He was an alleged organizer of more than 100 tons seizure of cannabis seized off the Coast of Hawaii by the US Coast Guards five years ago. He was also a man accused in two separate, more than 30 tons, drug seizures made by the Customs and the Maritime Security Agency (MSA).

He was also the principle accused in the world's largest drug seizure near Turbat, a few years ago.

Investigation showed that while in Karachi his sons run a thriving business and his wife operates dozens of secret accounts, Razzak lives at a posh rented apartment in Dubayy and operates under the cover of a trading license, Razzak, the sources said, travels on six different Pakistani Passports made under different names.

The multi billionaire trafficker in currently operating through a Russian syndicate that controls safe cargo rail passages to various "European cities. Razzak serves as a go between who organizes huge shipments of drugs from Pakistan to the mafia that controls governments in various central Asian republics.

Dubayy is also serving as a safe haven for Arif Baluch alias Noora Teddy, another top alleged drug baron. Pakistani and international anti drug agencies consider Noora as one of the leading supplier of drugs from Pakistan. Noora is believed to have tremendous access to Pakistani Coast line in Baluchistan.

It was interestingly revealed during this investigation that Noora's sponsor for his business in Dubayy is an important government official, probably unaware of his real business, with a sound legal status Noora Teddy also resides in a big apartment in a fashionable neighoburhood of Dubayy. In Karachi his family runs a formidable hotel business.

Of late Imam and Yaqub Gong the two notorious drug runners from Turbat moved to Dubayy and the neighbouring State of Ajman.

The Gongs are known as leading drug traffickers from the Pakistani Coastal towns. They are wanted to the ANF and other drug enforcement authorities.

The Gongs have traditional relationship with some of the locals and unlike other fellow drug barons from Pakistani they did not necessarily required trading licenses to make their stay in Dubayy, legal, Their hideouts in Turbat had been raided several times by the ANF last year.

In the recent months Mulla Ibrahim Peshawar, another notorious drug trafficker from Pakistan also left his bases in Peshwar and Karachi to settle permanently in Dubayy. Mulla Ibrahim, according to the Pakistani and western drug officials, is one of the leading drug barons from Pakistan. Soon after his arrival from Pakistan recently Mulla Ibrahim first got settled at Hayat Regency Hotel in Dubayy, while his contacts in that city tried to arrange a trading license for him.

Ibrahim Peshwari, decided to leave Pakistan after the ANF sleuths in the country raided and searched houses and hideouts he had been visiting both in Karachi and Peshwar.

Also based in Dubayy with a money changer license are the alleged drug barons identified as Tariq and Zahid brothers. Both brothers are known to be involved in Gold smuggling also. Informed sources identified both of them as financiers of various drug consignments that originated from Pakistan.

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Tariq and Zahid brothers with family's gold business in Karachi and Lahore were arrested briefly in Dubayy in 1994, the International Police (INTERPOL) also keeps a file on the two brothers. Their names figures in several FIRs [first information report] registered with the customs in Karachi.

Inquiries showed that Dawood Lat, one of the most wanted persons for the ANF, has not yet been able to reach Dubayy, where he owned a sizeable business beside a luxurious flat. Almost every one who had any sort of business association with Dawood alias Salim has now moved to Dubayy.

The UAE government has strong anti-drug laws and its officials work actively with international agencies to combat drug trafficking Official sources in Dubayy said that some active drug traffickers might have taken refuge in Dubayy in the cover of traders and businessmen, but, the UAE police would move rapidly once they get a specific information on drug trafficker hiding in the UAE.

It emerged during this investigation that most of the drug barons who have now settled in Dubayy had earlier been operating safely from Karachi, where even the senior officials of the erstwhile Pakistan Narcotic Control Board (PNCB) were believed on their pay roll.

Major General Salahhuddin Tirmizi, whose anti-narcotic force actually forced the top drug barons to abandon their safe-houses and business in Pakistan said that he had already concluded successful negotiations with his counter parts in the UAE and the authorities in both countries have agreed upon a memorandum of understanding to deter drug traffickers and criminals to take refuge in each other's countries.

Although Pakistan does apt have an extradition treaty with the UAE, but authorities here are confident that soon they would be able to act decisively against the suspected drug traffickers currently reported to be hiding in Dubayy.

Sri Lanka

UN Alerted LTTE May Possess Chemical Arms

BK0401100896 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 4 Jan 96

[Report by Thalif Deen in New York — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Sri Lanka has alerted the United Nations over the possible deployment of chemical weapons by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

On instructions from Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, Sri Lanka's permanent representative Ambassador H.L. de Silva last week raised the issue of chemical weapons with the director of the UN Centre for Disarmament Affairs Prvoslav Davinic.

Mr. de Silva was seeking advice from the United Nations on what steps Sri Lanka should take in the event of an attack by chemical gas: a weapon deemed illegal by the world body.

Mr. Davinic told THE DAILY NEWS that since the United Nations has banned the use of chemical weapons, the secretary-general has the authority to investigate any such attacks.

The UN head can, on his own initiative, send a team to probe the origins of such weapons, what harm they have caused and identify the type of weapons used.

Mr. Davinic said 45 countries, including Sri Lanka, have ratified a UN Convention on Chemical Weapons. The convention will come into legal force only when it is ratified by 65 countries.

But since January 1993, when the convention was open for signature in Paris, 159 of the 185 U.N. member States have signed it.

The treaty not only calls for a prohibition on the use of chemical weapons but also on their manufacture and sale.

Sri Lanka has told the UN that the LTTE had used phosgene gas against Sri Lankan troops in 1990.

The present fears have been generated by reports that the LTTE is trying to purchase or has already purchased chemical weapons from arms dealers in Europe.

The UN treaty is officially titled the "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and of their Destruction." [passage omitted]

Police Uncover LTTE Plan To Poison Eelam Group Leader

BK0401092796 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 4 Jan 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] AN LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] plan to kill EPDP [Eelam People's Democratic Party] leader Douglas Devananda by poisoning him has been uncovered by the Keselwatte police following the arrest of a Tiger intelligence wing member named Jayapalan in Colombo on Tuesday night.

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Jayapalan was arrested on a lead given by a man named Selliah who is being held and interrogated by police, after his name transpired at an inquest on the death of Rasakannu Tamil Chelvam at the General Hospital, Colombo.

Chelvam and his friend Kumaraswamy Sivapalan were admitted to the Colombo General Hospital in an alcoholic coma on New Year day, and Chelvam subsequently died at the Hospital.

Colombo AJMO Dr. N. Piyasoma who held the autopsy reported that the death was due to poisoning and the odour of cyanide was observed from Chelvam's nose.

At the inquest it was revealed that Selliah had admitted Chelvam and Sivapalan to hospital. Police arrested Selliah to unravel the mystery surrounding the death, and in the course of interrogations he had given important leads for the arrest of Jayapalan, whom the LTTE had despatched to Colombo to plan the poisoning attempt.

Investigations revealed that Jayapalan arrived in Colombo and befriended Selliah Rajkumar who used to frequent Mr. Devananda's residence.

His plan had been to present some bottles of arrack mixed with poison to Mr. Devananda.

Jayapaln had brought three bottles of arrack from an unlicenced tavern in the Pettah and handed them to Selliah after injecting a poisonous chemical into them.

Selliah had taken the three bottles to his room when his friends Chelvam and Sivapalan walked in. Not knowing that the arrack had been poisoned Selliah had postponed his visit to Mr. Devananda's house and thought of sharing one bottle with his friends.

After opening one bottle, he had gone to prepare an omelette to eat while taking the liquor.

When Selliah returned, the two friends had drunk about half the bottle and fallen unconscious.

Selliah then rushed his two friends to the General Hospital. The proprietor of the tavern concerned and two Tamil women who had harboured Jayapalan have also been arrested and handed over to the Crime Detective Bureau for further interrogation.

Mr. Douglas Devananda could not be contacted at the time of going to press but an EPDP member said they were aware about the attempt. However,he said that Mr.Devananda does not consume liquor.

SSP [Senior Superintendent of Police] Lionel Gunatilleke with ASP [Assistant Superintendent of Police] Chandra Prasad and the Keselwatte police are conducting further investigations directed by DIG [Deputy Inspector General] T.M.B. Dissanayake.

India Bars Entry of Suspected LTTE Sympathizers

BK0401090996 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 4 Jan 96

[Report by Upali Rupasinghe in New Delhi — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] INDIAN airport authorities are maintaining strict vigilance to prevent LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] cadres or sympathizers from entering the country, especially through the main international airports at Bombay, New Delhi, Calcutta and Madras.

As a result, Bombay's Sahar airport authorities last Saturday identified Vasantharaja, a former chairman of the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation, as a LTTE 'sympathiser' and sent him back to London on an Air India flight after being detained and questioned for nearly 10 hours.

His wife, who accompanied him, was also deported. Their British passports were handed over to the flight crew.

Vasantharaja had arrived in Bombay ostensibly to spend a two week holiday there. But intelligence sources said he was due to address a pro-LTTE meeting in the Tamil Nadu capital of Madras.

He has been granted a visa by the Indian High Commission in London. Immediately after his departure from London on an Air India flight, intelligence officials in New Delhi instructed Bombay airport authorities to prevent his entry into the country.

Accordingly, he was detained at the airport, questioned, refused entry and sent back on the next available flight.

Vasantharaja, who has also worked for the BBC, addressed pro-LTTE rallies in several European countries recently and contributes articles to pro-LTTE publications.

Meanwhile, Indian newspapers continue to give prominence to the baffling 'arms drop' case.

Yesterday's edition of THE TELEPGRAPH reported: "The Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in a report submitted to the Bengal state government has said that the end users of the arms dropped in Puruliya may be the LTTE.

"The top secret document has been handed over to the government because the CID is now playing second

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fiddle to the Central Bureau of Investigations which has taken over the case."

Agencies probing the arms drop case believe that the frontman of the incident called Randy alias Randhir has left for Colombo.

Telecommunications Center at Kalmunai Destroyed

BK0401114596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sri Lanka Telecom sources say that the terrorists attacked the telecommunication container [as heard] exchange center at Kalmunai yesterday. It has been completely destroyed due to incident which took place around 1830. This has resulted in about 600 telephones going out of order. The damage is estimated at about 40 million rupees. Necessary arrangements have been made to undertake repairs. The police and telecom are conducting further investigations.

The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] is practicing double standards with regard to the Tamil civilians in the north and the east. They have forced the Jaffna civilians to evacuate areas coming under the Operation Riviresa [Sunshine] saying that they will be ill-treated by the advancing troops. However, they follow a completely different policy in the east.

A leader of the Tamil political party in the east told the SLBC that the LTTE has begun attacking the troops in this province mingling with ordinary Tamil civilians. This has created unnecessary problems for those in the east and is building up into an explosive situation. He said that the LTTE action has already resulted in the death of several Tamil civilians.

LTTE Dispatch Details Fighting in North, East

BK0401111396 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Citing military reports, a correspondent in Colombo has reported that with the dawn of new year, at least 30 Sri Lankan soldiers have been killed in attacks carried out by contingents of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] against Sri Lankan troops at various places yesterday and today. The correspondent also stated that the Sri Lankan troops lost several weapons in the LTTE attacks yesterday and today.

A Sri Lankan Government report says only four of its soldiers were killed and three seriously injured in the LTTE attack at (Periyakalappu) locality in Batticaloa yesterday. There has been no authentic information about this so far. Yesterday's attack lasted only about 10 minutes. As soon as the LTTE launched its attack the soldiers fled and escaped, leaving their dead. The LTTE seized a number of weapons. The LTTE did not suffer any losses in this successful attack, which lasted for just a short duration.

Meanwhile, a tractor laden with soldiers became the target of an LTTE attack in the north today. All the soldiers on board were killed. It is understood that about 10 people were traveling in this tractor when it came under LTTE landmine attack in Kopay.

At Kattankudi, the LTTE carried out a surprise attack on Sri Lankan troops this morning. It is reported that the fighting lasted more than an hour.

Five fishermen were killed when Sri Lankan troops, who have suffered setbacks in LTTE attacks, went on a rampage and attacked innocent civilians. Three of the victims are said to be Muslims.

A few soldiers were killed in an attack by the LTTE in the (?Urani) area in Batticaloa this afternoon. The LTTE seized some arms from them.

A report from the Sri Lankan Government side states that a policeman was killed and two others injured in an LTTE attack in the Puttalam area today.

Second Lieutenant Navendan embraced martyrdom on 28 December, when Sri Lankan soldiers resorted to sniping at LTTE cadres who were walking on the street at (Karuvativu) in Batticaloa. Our tributes go to that valiant Tiger, who sacrificed himself in the war to liberate our motherland.

Two Sri Lankan Air Force bombers resorted to ruthless attacks on civilian localities at (Periya Pandivirichchan) in Mannar District on Friday, 29 December. A 10-year-old girl became the victim of this state terrorism while 13 others were injured and admitted to Madu Hospital. Five civilians houses were damaged in this attack.

The situation is deteriorating in the north due to the Chandrika Kumaratunga government's economic sanctions and ban on medicine. As there is severe shortage of (?antirabies) medicine in Kilinochchi, two people a month who are the victims of (?dog bites) have been dying. Sivaguru, the medical officer for Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu Districts, has said that he is unable to give proper treatment because the government is dilly-dallying in the dispatch of medicine.

Mr. Vasantharaja, former director of the Rupavahini Corporation, who was proceeding from London to Madras the day before yesterday to attend a conference to condemn the massacre of Eelam Tamils, was sent back from the Bombay airport. It should be noted

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that Vasantharaja has been exposing the Chandrika Kumaratunga government's peace ploy at various international fora.

The LTTE's thirst is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thanks.

Two Provincial Councils Dissolved

BK0401122096 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 4 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The North Central and Sabaragamuwa provincial councils have been dissolved with immediate effect. The dissolution orders were gazetted by the respective governors yesterday. Official sources say that elections in the two provinces will be held as soon as possible, and until such time the provincial administration will function on the governor's directive.

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